

GOOD CHEER



FREDERICK W. HACKWOOD



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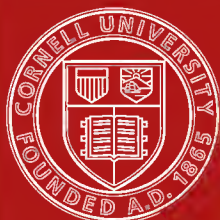
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GOOD CHEER
THE ROMANCE OF FOOD AND FEASTING

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**THE GOOD OLD TIMES :
THE ROMANCE OF HUMBLE LIFE IN ENGLAND**

By F. W. HACKWOOD

*Author of "Inns, Ales, and Drinking Customs of Old England,"
"Old English Sports," &c., &c.*

With a Coloured Frontispiece and 32 other Illustrations

In this volume the life of the common people in Old England is treated from the historic and picturesque side. The book traces the slow evolution of the English rustics from Saxon thrall and Norman villein ; it deals in a fascinating way with gipsies, vagrants, beggars, pedlars, outlaws, and other queer characters of the roads ; with the relations of high and low in the days of our forefathers ; with almshouses, "'spitals," and charity schools ; with the parish system and Bumble-dom generally, and with many other matters connected with the life of the poorer classes. The imminent break-up of the Poor Laws gives the volume a topical interest, but it is no dry-as-dust treatise for sociological students, but a book full of vivid human interest.

LONDON : T. FISHER UNWIN



THE ELECTION ENTERTAINMENT.

By William Hogarth.

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GOOD CHEER

THE ROMANCE OF FOOD AND
FEASTING

BY

FREDERICK W. HACKWOOD

AUTHOR OF "THE GOOD OLD TIMES," "INNS, ALES AND DRINKING CUSTOMS
OF OLD ENGLAND," ETC.

T. FISHER UNWIN

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1911

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AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

TO

MY AUNT

MRS. JAMES HENRY ATKINS

STREATHAM

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GOOD CHEER

I

"THE SACRED RAGE OF HUNGER"

The food impulse—The vice of gluttony—Post-prandial benevolence
—Discovery of fire leads to the art of cookery—The food of
primeval man—Varied with his situation—Successive stages of
culinary development—Geologic "kitchen middens"—Fewness
of primeval man's meals.

WHO shall be able to overrate the importance of eating? It is certain that when man was first created—or evolved—the conduct of the human race was dominated by the food impulse. It is an impulse which takes precedence of the sex impulse and all others. Homer makes allusion to "the sacred rage of hunger."

Man has to eat to live ; and to this primary condition of life he raises no particular objection. Man, indeed, eats and drinks with gusto—and not unfrequently, let it be confessed, without actual necessity.

"Meat," in ecclesiological symbolism, is the bait with which the spirit of evil tempts self-indulgent humanity. "The way to a man's heart is through his belly."

"There does not, at this blessed moment, breathe on the earth's surface a human being that willna prefer eating and drinking to all ither pleasure o'

body or soul," was the honest opinion of the typical northern "shepherd," delivered in the fulness of his content, when contemplating an ample supper-table laden with a comfortable array of substantial viands ; though at the same time he does not hesitate to denounce in good set terms "the awful and fearsome vice o' gluttony," which apparently in-harmonious sentiments are surely not irreconcilable.

Dr. Johnson bluntly said, "He who does not mind his belly will not mind anything."

Crapula quam gladius is an old saying which imports that the sword slays its thousands, and the table knife its tens of thousands.

By whomsoever a people is fed (saith the philosopher) to him their allegiance is due. Thus this teacher lays it down that the legitimate source of political authority is to be traced to the capacity for satisfying the appetites of the community. Ergo, he who can augment the sum of human enjoyments by the increase of gustatory delights ought to be emperor.

A good meal soothes the soul as it regenerates the body. From the abundance of it flows a benign benevolence. A good and copious dinner begets a mellowing influence ; it permeates the bosom with a bland philanthropy of sentiment, embracive of all classes, sects, and races of men. From the earliest times—from Assyrian days at least—the pledge cup has been the accompaniment of the banquet. Beneficence is largely a post-prandial effort.

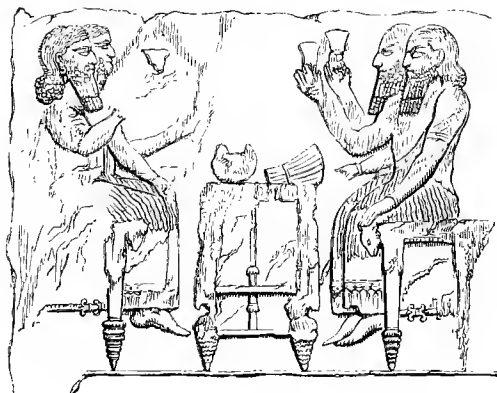
To one who has dined wisely and well the world presents itself in its most roseate hue. It is, metaphorically speaking, in this aspect the reader is invited to roam pleasantly through these pages, to glimpse at man in this, his genial, his most expansive, mood.

Before man had learned to dine he gorged him-



"MEAT" (IN ECCLESIOLOGICAL SYMBOLISM).

From an old MS.



THE PLEDGE CUP.

From an Assyrian sculpture.

self like the brute beast of the field ; to dine was the first step on the highway towards civilisation. The primeval savage cut his warm slice from the haunches of the living animal, and swallowed it reeking from the kitchen of Nature ; his discovery of fire and the art of cooking dates and authenticates the earliest stage in the refinement of his race. When man became a cooking animal he raised a new distinction which marked him off from all the rest of the animal creation.

Let us consider the progressive stages of this evolution. When the human animal was first placed on the earth, wild and naked, his most pressing wants were those associated with his body—shelter from the weather, and food to eat. Till he had acquired the ability to fashion weapons for the hunt his food consisted of the wild fruits and berries he found at hand ; the streams of fresh water running down the hillside provided him with drink. He might have taken and eaten of the fish that glided past, but of the deer and other creatures fleetier than himself he could make no meal till he had devised the wherewithal to take them. Nor of cooked food could he enjoy the pleasure till a knowledge of fire, or how to obtain it, had been acquired.

In the earliest ages of the world the food of man varied with the climate in which he found himself, the natural productions of each zone being always the most suitable. Between the tropics a purely vegetarian diet of fruits, seeds, and roots amply sufficed.

It was in the temperate and cold regions that man developed his taste for flesh food ; in the former he could indulge himself with a mixed diet of flesh and vegetables ; in the latter he had to put up with animal food alone.

Petavius and Le Clerk, both eminent theologians,

though not of the same school, have asserted that the first man was created in the autumn, when all the fruits were ripe, so that there was no immediate necessity for Mother Eve to commence culinary operations until some knowledge had been acquired of the nature and capabilities of earth's multifarious productions.

Anterior to man's use of flesh food came, it is reasonable to suppose, his discovery of fire; for not being naturally a carnivorous animal, man cooked his food to make it more palatable and more digestible. Man is the only animal that cooks its food.

In "Signor Resartus" Carlyle challenges the French definition of man as a "cooking animal," though he produces but few examples to prove the contrary. He asks:—

"Can a Tartar be said to cook, when he only readies his steak by riding on it? Again, what cooking does the Greenlander use, beyond stowing up his whale-blubber, as a marmot, in the like case, might do? Or how would Monsieur Ude prosper among those Orinoco Indians who, according to Humboldt, lodge in crow-nests on the branches of trees; and for half a year have no victuals but pipe-clay the whole country being under water?"

At first men ate flesh raw, as some primitive tribes do now, but afterwards they learnt to cook it by simply putting the meat directly into the fire. Later they learnt to dig a hole and line it with the hard hide of the slain animal, fill it with water, put the meat in, and then make stones fiercely hot, dropping them in, until the water was hot enough, and the meat cooked.

A little later on an advance in the art of cooking was made by learning how to fashion cooking vessels of clay—by the discovery of the art of pottery. When they had learnt to make nets of flax, which they floated with buoys of bark, and sank with stone weights, fish was added to man's dietary. These

in all probability, were the successive stages in primitive man's culinary development.

Any attempt to trace the history of the *Ars coquinaria* throughout the ages from the earliest times to the present, must result in a work that will remain incomplete. To trace the several gradations of refinement which have occurred in the science of eating in our own country, from the humble tables of our Celtic or Teutonic ancestors to the more studied meals of to-day, would be no small task. But to mark the various and contradictory alterations which have taken place in the art since the period when the abstemious patriarch regaled himself with a morsel of bread, only to the times when the remotest parts of the earth were visited, and the air and the ocean were ransacked in order to furnish the complicated delicacies of a Roman supper—only so much would be too stupendous an undertaking even to contemplate.

Where the dwellings of primitive man have been traced on the shores of Scotland, Denmark, and elsewhere, enormous heaps, which have been called “kitchen middens,” have been scientifically investigated. These have been proved to be the feeding-places of the people who lived there in bygone ages ; they are made up of piles of shells, largely those of the oyster, mussel, periwinkle, and similar creatures on which they fed. With these remains have been found the bones of stags and other animals, and also of birds, as well as the flint knives used in killing and preparing the creatures.

These evidences that man cooked and ate animal food date back fifteen thousand years. In the South of France, for instance, are remains of the older Stone Age which show conclusively that primeval man was a mighty hunter, habitually given to feast himself most bountifully on the fruits of the chase.

The refuse-heaps upon which he cast the bones of his victims now form immense deposits ; all these bones are split, indicating that he found a tasty as well as a highly nourishing food in the marrow ; and these split bones are invariably intermixed with layers of charcoal, and stones bearing the marks of fire. The animals which furnished forth his banquets included the reindeer, the bison, the horse, and other wild animals that apparently roamed about in vast herds ; and judging by the bone deposits, these cave-dwellers could have suffered from no shortness of the food supply—in one bed have been found the remains of not less than forty thousand horses. What visions are here presented of prehistoric feasting, of ravenous hunters lighting their fires at the close of the hunt, and spending the declining hours of the day in noisy revellings within the rocky recesses of the forest primeval.

It may be presumed that, as a general rule, the hunting of food provides but precarious feeding. The savage hunter, like the beast of prey, must have a stomach that adjusts itself to these conditions—to voracious gorging in times of plenty, to the sustenance of prolonged fastings when the hunt proves fruitless.

It is by no means impossible that the primitive savage fed but once a day. This practice prevailed even among civilised people within the historic period. In the war of Xerxes against Greece it was pleasantly said of the Abderites, who were burdened with providing for the king's table, that they ought to thank the gods for not inclining Xerxes to eat twice a day. Plato held the Sicilians to be gluttons for having two meals every day. Even in medieval times the bulk of the English people seldom exceeded two meals a day. Many feeding times *per diem* are unhygienic and unnecessary.

Hunger is never so intense as thirst ; and as a matter of ordinary experience, one has felt hunger less frequently than thirst. Hunger, too, is satisfied sooner than thirst. The famishing man dreams of eating, though his visionary feasts are generally of the Barmecidean and unsatisfying type. The hunger of the primeval savage no doubt approximated more nearly to the ravening hunger of the brute beast. As to the part played by woman in the social and domestic economy of that undeveloped age, let a woman speak ; as thus, Olive Schreiner, in “ Woman and Labour ” :—

“When first man wandered the naked, newly-erect savage, hunted and fought while we wandered with him ; each step of his was ours. Within our bodies we bore the race, on our shoulders we carried it ; we sought the roots and plants for its food ; and when man’s barbed arrow or hook brought the game, our hands dressed it. Side by side, the savage man and the savage woman, we wandered free together and laboured free together. And we were contented !”

II

CULINARY ART THE MAINSPRING OF CIVILISATION

Earliest civilisation—The Golden Age—Man's non-flesh diet—The ambrosia and nectar of the gods—Pythagorean vegetarianism—Primitive barbarism—Anthropophagians—The flesh of sacrificed animals first eaten—Charles Lamb's droll dissertation on "the origin of roast pig"—The discovery of salt—The condimenting art—Progress of culinary art—The kitchen becomes the focus of human society.

BUT let us for a time leave the hard facts of man's existence, as they are revealed to us by the investigations of modern science, and rove over the pleasanter fields of classic fable which has pretended, even from the infancy of the world, to account for man's gradual emergence into the light of civilisation. To the general reader the classic era will doubtless be found more alluring than the geologic age. And we warrant

"You shall have better cheer
Ere you depart, and thanks to stay and eat it,"

as the great dramatist puts it.

Hesiod, the poet of peace and agriculture, as opposed to Homer, the poet of war and the heroic virtues, writing in the eighth century B.C., regarded the diet of man as mainly or entirely dependent on

agriculture, and says that in the Golden Age man was

“Pleased with earth’s unbought feasts ; all ills removed,
Wealthy in flocks, and the Blest beloved,
Death, as a slumber, pressed their eyelids down,
All Nature’s common blessings were their own.
The life-bestowing tilth its fruitage bore,
A full, spontaneous, and ungrudging store.”

Here, as in the Jewish theology, according to the Book of Genesis, there is the apparent contradiction of the co-existence of “flocks and herds” with a prevalence of a non-flesh diet.

The second race of man, in the Silver Age, were also supposed to have been equally guiltless of bloodshed in the preparation of food. The ancient poets agreed, when painting the fabled past, in presenting the fictitious age of innocence in this particular light.

It was reserved for the third or Brazen Age to inaugurate a flesh diet.

“Strong with the ashen spear, and fierce and bold,
Their thoughts were bent on violence alone,
The deed of battle and the dying groan,
Bloody their feasts, with wheaten food unblest.”

As to the “immortals inhabiting the Olympian mansions,” according to Hesiod and the poets who followed him, they fed ever on the pure and bloodless food of ambrosia, and drank only of nectar, a distillation of refined dew.

It has long been contended that antediluvian man was strictly vegetarian. Similarly, the Pythagorean system of ancient Greece is said to have forbidden indulgence in all animal food. The poet of modern vegetarianism tells us that Pythagoras borrowed his dietary principles from the Hindoos.

“He first the taste of flesh from tables did
And argued well, if arguments could move :
O mortals ! from your fellows’ blood abstain
Nor taint your bodies with a food profane.”

As Pythagoras left nothing whatever of his philosophy in writing, his exact views on the matter of diet cannot be known ; but it is quite certain that temperance in every form was strictly enjoined. He died 500 B.C.

Here we step outside the pale of ancient civilisation, and attempt to explore the trackless wilderness of its contemporary barbarism.

It was to the art of cookery, contends our argumentative poet, that the successive stages of civilisation were directly due. We call it an art, yet, "a burning question" as cooking must always be, we are never quite sure whether it should be enrolled as a science or as a fine art.

"To cookery we owe well-ordered States
Assembling men in dear society."

Let us see how he reasons it all out.

"The art of cookery drew us gently forth
From that ferocious life when, void of faith,
The Anthropophaginian ate his brother."

This part of the poet's reasoning is not very convincing if, as is generally reported by travellers, the South Sea Islander still roasts his "long pig," if, as the witty Sydney Smith put it, no self-respecting cannibal chief out there is ever without "cold missionary on his sideboard."

But to resume the quotation :—

"Wild was the earth, man feasting upon man,
When one of nobler sense and milder heart,
First sacrificed an animal ; the flesh
Was sweet——"

Quite so. But this part of the argument—the allurements—is more deliciously put before us by Charles Lamb, in his humorous "Dissertation

on Roast Pig," though in the case he quotes the sacrifice of the animal was accidental and involuntary. Still, as against this dissemblance, it will be seen that the dissertation demonstrates that the art of cookery was an indirect and somewhat belated outcome of the discovery of fire.

"Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his *Mundane Mutations*, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term *Cho-fang*, literally the Cooks' Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swineherd *Ho-ti*, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son, *Bo-bo*, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as youngkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it) what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East, from the remotest periods that we read of. *Bo-bo* was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from? not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young fire-brand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his

fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling*. Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail-stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it."

And thus the gentle Elia rambles on, revelling in every one of the details of his burlesque genesis of roast pig; telling us, with inimitable drollery, how the people took to firing their homes to indulge themselves in the delights of this delicacy; till some philosopher discovered that the flesh of swine "might be cooked (*burnt* they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string or spit came a century or two later." Of the subject of his pretended rhapsodies, the humorist declares that in the whole *mundus edibilis* there is nothing to equal roast sucking-pig.

"There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted crackling, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O, call it not fat! but an undefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result."

And here, reluctantly, we leave our delightful essayist, to resume the thread of our main discourse.

The next stage of development in the culinary art was the discovery of salt (which the Greeks consecrated to the gods), and other condiments—anything with which man could add a piquancy to his cooked food, particularly dishes of sodden meat.

“The precious salt, that gold of cookery!
For when its particles the palate thrill’d
The source of seasonings, charm of cookery ! came.”

Though the Numidians and a few other nations have been unacquainted with salt, it has generally been so highly prized as to form a suitable commodity for taxation—there was the infamous Gabelle of France, to wit. It was undoubtedly a profound knowledge of the condimenting art that in due time produced the arch-cook.

“At length a miracle not yet performed—
They minced the meat which, roll’d in herbage soft,
Nor meat nor herbage seemed, but to the eye
And to the taste, the counterfeited dish,
Mimicked some curious fish.”

Thus it was that human invention, in culinary matters as in all other branches of knowledge, gradually progressed from the simple to the complex—dare we say, from the real to the “mock”? from the delicacy to the cheapened substitute?

“Invention rare !
Then every dish was seasoned more and more,
Salted, or sour, or sweet, and mingled oft
Oatmeal and honey.”

But mark to what artificiality of life all this culinary

progress tended, even in the earliest epoch of human civilisation.

“To enjoy the meal
Men congregated in the populous towns,
And cities flourished, which we cooks adorned
With all the pleasures of domestic life.”

And now the secret of the Tower of Babel is out !
Communities began, saith the wisdom of a French
proverb, by establishing their kitchen.

III

THE DIETARY OF THE SCRIPTURES

Antediluvian vegetarianism—Flesh food granted—Blood prohibited—Simplicity of Hebrew fare—"The flesh-pots of Egypt"—Miracle of the quails—Eastern acridopophagians—Manna, "the bread of heaven"—Bread and water—Loaves and fishes—Hebrew hospitality—"The fatted calf"—Rabbinical legend of the fateful "mess of pottage"—"Savoury meat"—"Butter in a lordly dish"—"Milk and honey"—Parched corn—Clean and unclean animals—Birds—And fishes—The paschal lamb—No vegetarian exclusiveness.

BIBLICAL students are not quite certain whether the antediluvians were vegetarians, although the weight of opinion leans to that view. One contention is that, the Flood having destroyed the green herb, a flesh food was granted to Noah and his family. When Noah came forth from the ark the Lord, among other admonitions, said, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." While some contend that animal food had never before been eaten by man, others are of opinion that from the first institution of sacrifices, a portion of the animals so offered to God were eaten by the offerer, and that this participation in the offerings formed an integral part of the sacrificial rite; and that the use of animal food had, until this period, been restricted to the flesh of sacrificed victims.

The law of Moses commanded the Jews to mix salt with everything offered in sacrifice ; salt, as the preservative of animal substances from decay, was the emblem of purity, perfection, and perpetuity ; it was eaten by them at every meal as the symbol of friendship.

The Noachian admonition proceeded to prohibit the eating of blood. " But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." This prohibition is consistently maintained throughout the Old Testament ; in Leviticus xvii. 10 and 11 two reasons are assigned—first, because it is the life of the animal ; secondly, because it is set apart for making atonement.

There were other religious reasons which need not be entered into here : it will suffice if it be noted that the Christian brethren were distinctly told to abstain from things offered to idols, from things strangled, and from blood (Acts xv. 20)—an apostolic injunction which was at once a warning against certain heathen practices at religious feasts and a concession to the feelings of Jewish converts.

The food of the Hebrews was generally of the simplest kind, as bread, milk, rice, honey, and vegetables. God had given them every " green herb for food," but animal food seems to have been more or less reserved for use at the appointed festivals. The food in which they indulged while they were in the land of Egypt, " in the house of bondage," is mentioned in Numbers xi. 5 : " We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely ; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick."

It is generally believed that the flesh for which the Israelites murmured in the Wilderness was the " flesh " of the fish of the land of Egypt, of which there was always an abundant supply—hence the

great distress of the people when the waters of the river were turned into blood so that the fish died—and which was a diet so peculiarly delicious that it can well be imagined how wanderers through an arid country would naturally long for it when compelled to eat the unpalatable food of a desert region over a long period, and that without the least variation.

When they murmured for the “flesh-pots of Egypt” (Exodus xvi. 3) the Lord sent them Quails on two occasions (Numbers xi. 32). Both occasions were the spring of the year, when these birds pass along the coasts of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean on their way from Asia to Europe in vast numbers; the miracle consisted in the fact that they were driven by a great wind in sufficient quantities to furnish food for a million of persons for more than a month.

Some commentators have endeavoured to prove that a species of locust should be understood for the word which has been translated “quail.” Locusts are commonly eaten in Palestine and the neighbouring countries—did not the food of John the Baptist consist of “locusts and wild honey”?—some of the minor nations there have been described as “Acridopophagi,” or eaters of locusts, that insect forming the principal article of their diet.

The locusts mentioned in the New Testament were not the bean-pods of the locust-tree, an impression which is sometimes conveyed; for the word translated is *acrides*—the Greek name of the insatiable insects which periodically devastate the vegetation of some parts of the world. These insects are eaten by the Bedouins, who string them together and eat them on their journeys with unleavened cake. The Bushmen esteem them a luxury, and Dr. Livingstone thought them superior to shrimps. In the East honey

is always eaten with them, as a sweet condiment which renders them more digestible. They were not forbidden to the Jews.

What was the precise nature of the Manna, with which the Israelites were fed during their wanderings, cannot be said. It is described as white as hoar-frost, round, and of the bigness of coriander-seed ; it fell every morning upon the dew, and when the latter evaporated under the heat of the sun, the Manna appeared alone, lying upon the rocks or the sand. It was certainly nothing common to the Wilderness, and must be accepted as something altogether miraculous. Manna has been poetically described as "angels' food," as "the bread of heaven" ; the author of the Book of Wisdom (xvi. 20, 21) says it so accommodated itself to one's taste that it proved palatable and pleasing to all. While the quails were divinely provided for a month or so, the manna served as a food, sustaining and all-sufficient, for the whole period of the forty years' wanderings.

As the Jews of old chiefly satisfied their hunger with bread—wheaten for choice—and quenched their thirst with water, bread and water are commonly spoken of in the Scripture as competent for the sustenance of man. "Loaves and fishes" made not only a goodly but a desirable meal.

Though the dietary of the heroes of the Bible was exceedingly plain, the Jews were given to the practice of hospitality ; it was, and is, a custom of the East to "love hospitality."

When the Hebrews of old wished to evince hospitality, they boiled or roasted the flesh of sheep, or fatted cattle, to place before their guests. Thus Abraham proposed to entertain the three angels who visited him with "a calf tender and good," and cakes of unleavened bread made upon the hearth, while the

feast to celebrate the return of the Prodigal Son was primarily to include "the fatted calf."

The dish which was presented by Abraham to the angels on the plains of Mamre is identical with that which to this day is presented by the Arabs of Morocco to their more distinguished guests—a shoulder of veal well roasted, and covered with butter and milk.

How plain was the food of the patriarchs appears from the pottage of lentils and bread which Jacob had prepared, and which Esau so coveted that he sold his birthright for it. Tradition hath it that the learned Rabbi El Bassam, the celebrated Jewish commentator on the Talmud, spent fifteen years in vainly trying to discover the name of the cook who prepared this wonderful pottage for which the reckless and impatient Esau sold all his rights of primogeniture.

The rabbinical story bearing upon the bartering away of Esau's birthright is to this effect: And it came to pass that Esau went hunting in the field upon a certain day when Nimrod, King of Babel, was also engaged in the same pursuit. A rivalry existed between these two mighty hunters which amounted to a deadly jealousy; and Esau happening upon Nimrod when all but two of his attendants had left him, he concealed himself. When presently Nimrod passed his hiding-place, Esau pointed his arrow, pulled his bow, and shot his rival through the heart. Then rushing forth from his concealment, Esau engaged in a deadly struggle with the two attendants, overcame them, and killed them both. Stripping from Nimrod's shoulders the wonderful coat which God had made for Adam, Esau hastened home, reaching his father's dwelling-place weary, hungry, and faint. It was then Esau said to Jacob, "Give me of that red pottage, for I am faint." And Jacob said,

“Sell me this day thy birthright.” And Esau said in his heart, “They will surely avenge upon me the death of Nimrod”; therefore he answered, “Behold I am going to die; what can the birthright profit me?” So Jacob bought from Esau the birthright, and also his right of burial in the cave of Machpelah, and after the bargain was concluded gave his brother the food he asked for.

Pottage made from the red lentils is exceedingly savoury, and while cooking, diffuses far and wide an odour extremely grateful to a hungry man. It was, therefore, no slight temptation to Esau, returned weary and famished from an unsuccessful hunt in that burning climate. Modern hunters, indeed, have been known to return so utterly spent as, like him, to believe themselves dying.

Why Jacob selected lentils for his meal that day is the subject of further exposition. The Rabbis say that lentils is the food partaken of during the days of their mourning, by persons who have suffered a family bereavement; a symbolic significance is recognised in the lentil's being shaped round, like a wheel, inasmuch as it affords a source of consolation to the mourners to know that they do not suffer alone, death rolling round to all in turn, and none being able to escape it. That day the death of the patriarch Abraham had occurred, infer the Rabbis, and it was on this account Jacob had “sod pottage of lentils,” the customary meal for family mourners.

The “savoury meat” which was so much to the liking of blind old Isaac could be prepared equally well from either hunted venison or from “the kids of the goats,” as would appear from the text of Genesis xxvii.

It is interesting to note that the injunction, “Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk” appears not less than three times in the Pentateuch—whether

as a precept of humanity, or as forbidding the imitation of some heathen custom, or whether to be interpreted as prohibiting the use of butter in cooking, has never been finally and satisfactorily settled. The butter mentioned in the Song of Deborah as being brought forth "in a lordly dish" was simply curdled milk.

Butter is mentioned a number of times in the Scriptures, and frequently along with honey. The latter held a prominent place among the delicacies of an Eastern meal—was not the fertility of the land of Canaan conveyed in the poetic description of it as "a land flowing with milk and honey"? The bread mentioned in the Bible might be of wheat or barley, or even of lentils or beans. It was made into very small loaves, three of which would be required to make the meal of an ordinary adult person. Parched corn, also, was and is a common article of food in those Eastern countries. As we may infer from the Book of Ruth, harvest is the time of parched corn. It is prepared by plucking a quantity of the best ears with the stalks attached, not too ripe, and tying them into small parcels. A blazing fire is then kindled with dry grass and thorn bushes, and the corn heads are held in it until the chaff is mostly burnt off. The grain is then sufficiently roasted to be eaten, and it has that agreeable carbonised flavour which the jaded appetite of the city man demands when he orders a "grill."

By Levitical law all animals were divided into two classes, the clean and the unclean—those which might be eaten as food and offered as sacrifices, and those which were prohibited. This division is believed to have existed before the law of Moses, and, so far as they related to sacrifice, even before the Flood. The reason assigned for this distinction is that Jehovah wished to teach His people that to be holy

they must be separate from the impure heathen around them ; a lesson, say the bibliologists, borne out by the explanation which Peter received in his vision at Joppa, when he was plainly taught that the distinction between Jew and Gentile was now at an end.

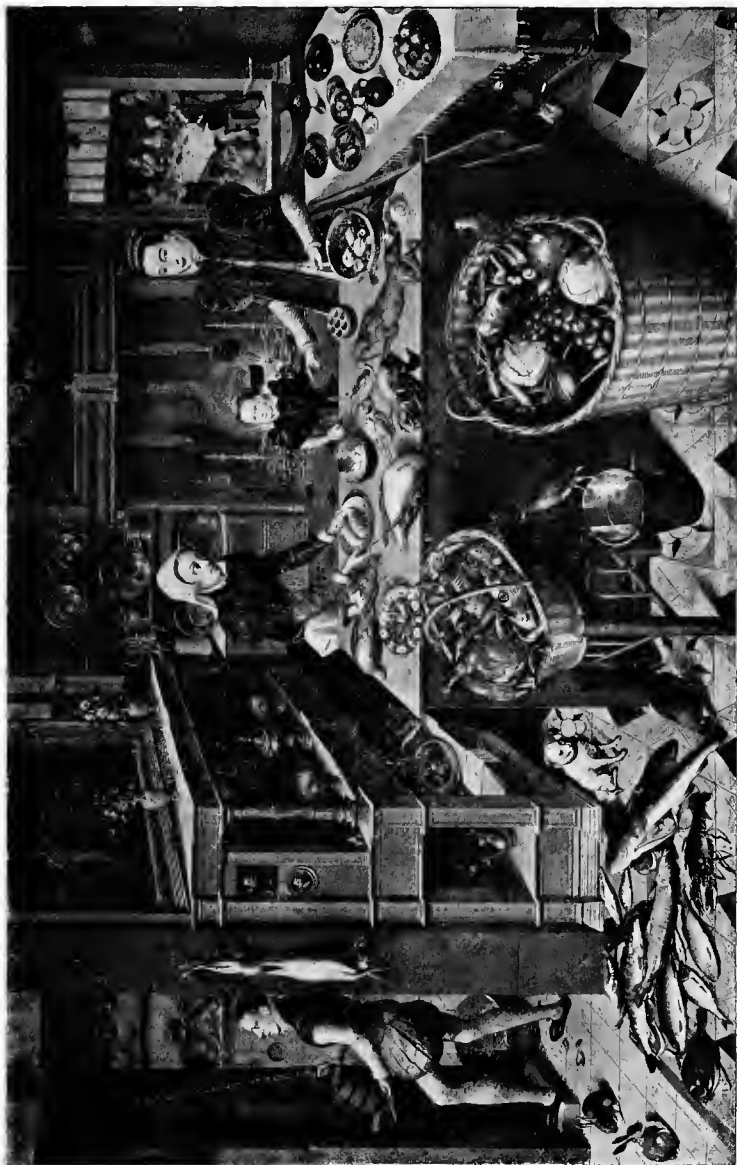
All animals that have not cloven hoofs, and do not chew the cud, were accounted unclean, among them being the hare and the hog. With birds these characteristics failed to afford a guide, nor could the Hebrew legislator fix on any distinctive features to mark out the lawful from the unlawful, and so lists of exceptions had to be drawn up without any word concerning those that were allowed.

Birds of prey were generally prohibited, while those which eat vegetables were admitted. Among the unclean birds were also the moorhen, swan, bittern, heron, curlew, and lapwing (Deuteronomy xiv. 12-18).

Of fish, those were accounted clean, whether of fresh water or of the sea, which possessed both fins and scales (Leviticus xi.). The oyster, it is interesting to note, is not eaten by the orthodox Jew because it "creeps"—at least, this was the ruling of no less authorities than Dean Stanley and Frank Buckland.

Considerations of space forbid any detailed allusion to the numerous Levitical laws relating to food and the preparation of it, which formed an integral part of the religious observances of God's own chosen people. Passing mention, however, is demanded by the paschal lamb, which was eaten by the Jews with peculiar solemnities at the Feast of the Passover, accompanied by unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and roasted on a spit made of pomegranate wood.

The Levitical Code abounds with ordinances for regulating the cooking and dressing of food ; but the reproduction of the German painter's "Marriage in Cana" is given here to show the remarkable view



Photo]

THE MARRIAGE AT CANA OF GALILEE.

By Ludger tom Ring the Younger.

(In the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin.)

[Hauptstaubl.]

To face p. 44.

it affords of a country-house interior of the sixteenth century, in which the dining-room appears to lead out of, and form an extension of, the kitchen.

In the Jewish dispensation there was a simplicity about the authorised dietary of the people which at times was almost ascetic in its austerity. But there was no vegetarian exclusiveness.

The Scriptures, it is curious to note, accounted it unto Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty king of Babylon, as a distinct part of his punishment when, for his impious pride, he was visited by seven years of insanity, during which he, unfitted for the company of men, "ate the grass of the field like oxen." Are these seven years of herbivorous purgation to be regarded simply as equivalent to, or symbolic of, a lustrum?

The Rabbis of the Talmud assert that Adam and the ten generations succeeding him were absolute vegetarians, to whom all animal food was strictly prohibited (Genesis i. 29). Rabbi Joshuah ben Levi says when Adam was punished for the great disobedience, and told that through his fault the ground would be cursed, he felt the greatest humiliation at that portion of his sentence, "Thou shalt eat the herb of the field" (Genesis iii. 18). Tears came into his eyes as he exclaimed, "Shall I and mine ass indeed eat out of one manger?" But when the Divine judgment immediately proceeded, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," Adam was more than consoled. The obvious moral of this rabbinical embellishment being, of course, There is comfort in work.

IV

THE FOODS AND CULINARY PRACTICES OF THE ANCIENTS

Simple meals of a primitive people—Severe regimen of the Spartan “*Syssitia*”—The public mess—Black broth of Lycurgus—Sybarite *v.* Spartan—Why Sparta decayed—Pythagorean philosophy—Common tables—Gymnasts not vegetarians—Food and cookery of Homeric heroes—Greek culinary art—Epicureans—The Latins—Sumptuary laws—Excesses of Vitellius—Domitian and Heliogabalus—The high art of Roman cookery—Pork diet—Invention of capons—Lucullus—The slave cook—*Addephagia*, Goddess of Good Cheer—Ancient Egyptians—Their dietary—“The skeleton at the feast”—The ancient leaning towards vegetarianism—Early use of legumes—Invention of the grindstone—*Mola*, Goddess of Mills—Invention of bread—Parsley—Its virtue—The cabbage adored—The leek a divinity—The haricot discovered by Alexander—And the onion—Asparagus—Truffles—Mushrooms—The cherry—The olive.

THE Golden Age derived its splendid appellation from the innocence of its manners and the simplicity of its food.

In the primitive ages of the world, the first men everywhere are believed to have regaled themselves on every mild and wholesome herb, and on all the luscious fruits spontaneously produced. The Arcadians lived on acorns, the Argives on pears, the Athenians on figs. The poets corroborate this testimony of the ancient historians. We may read that Fabricius, after having been honoured with several triumphs, was found in his cottage eating the pulse

he had himself raised and gathered in his garden. Horace tells us that Scipio and Laelius, while their cabbage was boiling, used to spend the vacant hour indulging in sallies of social mirth and humour with Lucilius, the old poet. And, says the moralist, the life of man was abbreviated as his luxury increased—the seven kings of Rome reigned longer than the first twenty of its emperors.

To argue from this that the ancients were avowed and rigid vegetarians is absurd. But it may readily be conceded that the minds of a highly cultured people, amenable to the logic of facts, would grasp the many hygienic advantages which were to be obtained by a rigid adherence to a severely restricted diet.

The rigours of set diet for hygienic and disciplinary purposes are seen in the history of ancient Greece. According to the laws of Lycurgus (B.C. 776), every Spartan child was exhibited immediately after birth to public view, and if deemed deformed or weakly, and unfit for a future life of labour and fatigue, was exposed to perish on Mount Taygetus. Living always in apprehension of a revolt of the Helots, their hereditary slaves, the Spartans were compelled to be a nation of soldiers.

At the age of seven every Spartan boy was taken from his mother's care, and handed over to public classes, to be trained under special officers of the State; he was taught gymnastic games, subjected to severe bodily discipline, and compelled to submit to hardships and suffering without repining or complaint. A Spartan was not considered to have reached the full age of manhood till he was thirty, when he was allowed to marry, and considered eligible for an officer of State. But he remained still under public discipline, spending most of his time in military exercises, and was not permitted even to

reside and take meals with his wife. He slept at night in the public barracks, and took his meals with his comrades at the public mess.

The public mess—called “*Syssitia*”—is said to have been instituted by Lycurgus to prevent all indulgence of the appetite. Public tables were provided, at which every male citizen was obliged to take his meals. Each table accommodated fifteen persons, who formed a separate mess, into which no new member was admitted, except by the unanimous consent of the whole company. Each sent monthly to the common stock a specified quantity of barley meal, wine, cheese, and figs, and a little money to buy flesh and fish. No distinction of any kind was allowed at these frugal meals. Meat was only eaten occasionally, and one of the principal dishes was black broth. Of what it consisted we do not know. The tyrant Dionysius found it very unpalatable; but as the cook told him, the broth was nothing without the seasoning of fatigue and hunger. Truly was the black broth of Lycurgus symbolical of a glorified patriotism. The Spartan woman was not accounted a member of the family but a part of the State. She was proud of herself and of her children. When a woman of another country said to Gorgo, wife of Leonidas, “The Spartan women alone rule the men,” she replied, “The Spartan women alone bring forth men.”

Another anecdote to the same purport relates that a native of Sybaris, after tasting the renowned but unpalatable black broth, exclaimed, “I am not astonished that you Spartans are so fearless of death on the battlefield, since any one in his senses would rather die than be compelled to live on such execrable food.”

When the black broth of Lycurgus disappeared, Sparta decayed. There came a time when the lead-

ing men, being able to enrich themselves by foreign commands or at the expense of the public treasury, formed themselves into a higher class of citizens, called Peers, while the lower orders, called Inferiors, although nominally in enjoyment of equal privileges, were no longer able, in consequence of the altered state of living, to bear their share in the *Syssitia*, and so sank into a degraded and discontented class, ripe for sedition and anarchy. The accumulation of wealth into a few hands and luxurious living were the downfall of Sparta.

The Pythagorean philosophy, which came a century or two later, in so far as it was an esoteric institution, was supposed to include religious orgies, notwithstanding that its ethics demanded the practice of asceticism. It has been represented that Pythagoras forbade all animal food; other authorities contend that he allowed all kinds of animal food except the flesh of oxen used for ploughing, and rams. There is a similar discrepancy as to the prohibition of fish and beans. But temperance of all kinds seems to have been strictly enjoined. It is also stated that the Pythagoreans had common meals, resembling the Spartan system, at which they met in companies of ten. The cultivation of a calm demeanour and an elevated tone was aimed at, and it was taught that souls under the domination of sensuality either passed into the bodies of animals, or, if incurable, were thrust down into Tartarus, to meet with expiation or condign punishment.

Milo, of Crotona, six times victor in wrestling at the Olympic Games, is said to have been a member of the Pythagorean school, yet it is related that after his feats of carrying a four-year-old heifer on his shoulders through the stadium at Olympia, he ate the whole carcass in a single day. The gymnast of the Pythagorean cult was manifestly very far from being a vegetarian.

In the matter of their repasts the illustrious Homeric heroes were not in the least fastidious, nor did they hanker after variety in their viands. But they possessed vigorous and uncultivated appetites, and appear to have possessed an astounding stomachic capacity. Generally they were contented with roast beef ; for a festival or a wedding dinner the frugal fare was a piece of roast beef ; and the king of kings, the pompous Agamemnon, offered no greater rarity to the august chiefs of Greece assembled round his hospitable table. It is true that the guest to be most honoured received for his share an entire fillet of beef.

But this was not gluttony. It was the satisfying of a natural and a healthy appetite, such as heroes had ere man had learnt to live the artificial life, and as a consequence become finicking and dyspeptic. Not only did Milo eat a whole beast, but we are told that Theagenes of Thasos, another athlete, similarly refreshed himself to this extent after a prolonged bout of severe physical exercise. These feats are recorded because they were "heroic," something more than life-size. Did not Hercules and Lepreas have a friendly contest which should in the quickest time eat up a whole ox? And when Hercules had won did he not challenge his adversary to a drinking bout, and came off victor again? In those primitive times the principal meal was at the close of the day, the supper, which even kings prepared with their own hands, when beef, or mutton, or goat's flesh satisfied the daintiest appetites.

The heroes of Homer prepared their repasts with their own hands. Ulysses surpassed all others in the art of kindling a fire and laying a cloth. Patroclus drew the wine, and Achilles very carefully turned the spit. Such were the simple manners of the heroic age. But as the centuries rolled by it is not

unreasonable to suppose that this pristine simplicity slightly waned. Indeed, it would be unsafe to assert that the Greeks and the Romans did not arrive at a knowledge of chimneys. In Aristophanes' comedy "The Wasps" there is a character, Philocles, who hides himself in a chimney. A slave who hears him cries out, "What a noise there is in the pipe of this chimney!" Philocles, being discovered, exclaims, "I am the smoke, and I am trying to escape."

That the ancient Greeks were adepts in the art of the table must appear from the fame of that lost recipe of the poet Menander—it was for a fish sauce, and its fame has come down through more than twenty centuries as having been delectable and ambrosial beyond all belief.

To Greece belonged the honour of producing the original seven sages of the kitchen: Orion, who invented the white sauce, and Lampriadas, the discoverer of brown sauce; Nereus of Corinth, who made of the conger-eel a dish fit for the gods, and Agres of Rhodes, who first taught the bone method of dressing fish; Atlantus, who made the most perfect restorative, and Euthymus, who cooked vegetables so exquisitely that he was named Lentillus.

Then there was that mysterious mess of Circe's, into the compounding of which an element of poetry should surely be enumerated as an essential ingredient:—

"Red wine, and in it barley-meal and cheese and honey, and mighty drugs withal, of which if a man drank he forgot all that he loved."

One who indulges systematically and critically in the luxuries of the table is called an epicure; but this appropriation of the name of the celebrated Athenian teacher, Epicurus, is said to be an aspersion on the character of that philosopher, whose mode of

living was really simple, temperate, and cheerful. He held that human happiness was the ultimate end of all philosophy, an ethical theory founded on the dogma of the Cyrenaics, that pleasure constituted the highest happiness, and must consequently be the end of all human exertions. It is owing to a very superficial knowledge of his philosophy and the undeserved ridicule of the comic poets that those who gave themselves up to a sensual life came to be called Epicureans.

It is recorded that Epicurus, whose doctrine may have been effeminate, wrote to a friend that he lived upon nothing but biscuit and water, and desired him to send him a little cheese to reserve till he had a mind to make "a sumptuous feast."

Even the Latins began with the simple life. The Romans in the earlier periods of their republic, when even a consul would dine on a roasted turnip, were distinguished by their frugal temperance; but as they increased in wealth and power they sank into the grossest sensual extravagance—the records of the empire have been aptly entitled the "annals of gluttony." The profusion of the Emperor's table almost exceeds belief. When invention failed to provide delicacies to stimulate the languid appetites of Rome's imperial epicures immense rewards were offered to discover new combinations of food.

It has been said that Rome would never have needed sumptuary laws had it not been corrupted by cooks from Athens and Syracuse. It is forgotten that the ordinances of the consuls prescribed profusion, which led to excess; and the ruinous expenses of a ridiculous gastrophagy could scarcely but follow in due time. The quantity and the quality of food disposed of was alike extravagant.

The Emperor Claudius generally had six hundred guests at his table. Galba breakfasted before day-

break, and the cost of his breakfast would have enriched a hundred families. Julius Cæsar sometimes ate at a meal the revenues of several provinces. Tiberius gave more than three thousand pounds to the author of a dialogue in which the interlocutors were supposed to be mushrooms, fig-peckers, oysters, and thrushes. Geta had all sorts of meat served up to him in alphabetical order. Nero sat at the table from midday till midnight, amidst the most monstrous profusion.

Could the follies of gastronomic monomania go farther?

History knows no greater glutton and epicure than the Emperor Vitellius, friend and favourite of Nero. Indeed, his chief talent lay in eating and drinking; he made the table his amusement, and spent enormous sums of money upon it. We read of Vitellius that he

“could with beastly voracity exemplify the gluttony which prevailed in the time of the Cæsars by eating a round thousand of oysters at a sitting; and increased the heinousness of the offence by availing himself of the abominable fashion then in vogue of tickling the palate with a peacock feather in order to make room for new indulgence. Even the wise and good Seneca, who praised poverty but could not live comfortably on millions of money, ate a few hundred oysters daily, and then blamed the delicious mollusc for his indigestion.”

Vitellius made four meals a day, and all those he took with his friends never cost less than ten thousand crowns. That which was given to him by his brother was most magnificent; two thousand select dishes were served up: seven thousand fat birds, and every delicacy which the ocean and the Mediterranean Sea could furnish.

Domitian one day convoked the Senate to know in what fish-kettle they should cook a monstrous turbot, which had been presented to him. The senators gravely weighed the matter; but as there was no utensil of this kind big enough, it was pro-

posed to cut the fish in pieces. This advice was rejected. After much deliberation it was resolved that a proper utensil should be made for the purpose ; and it was decided that whenever the Emperor went to war a great number of potters should accompany him. The most pleasing part of the story is that a blind senator seemed in perfect ecstasy at the turbot, by continually praising it, at the same time turning in the very opposite direction.

Then there was the Emperor Heliogabalus, whose reign was characterised by acts of fantastic folly and bestial excesses, the particulars of which almost transcend the limits of credibility. On one occasion he had the heads of six hundred ostriches brought to his table, only to eat their brains. Camel's flesh was served at his banquets, and camel's feet he considered a great delicacy.

On one occasion Heliogabalus regaled twelve of his friends in a manner scarcely to be credited : he gave to each guest animals of the same species as those he served them to eat ; he insisted upon their carrying away all the vases or cups of gold, silver, and precious stones out of which they had drunk ; and it is remarkable that he supplied each with a new one every time he asked to drink. He placed on the head of each a crown interwoven with green foliage, and gave each a superbly ornamented and well-yoked car to return home in. He rarely ate fish but when he was near the sea ; and when he was at a distance from it he had his fish served up with sea-water.

It must not be thought that these solecisms of luxury were characteristic of Roman society, even in its most luxurious period. The feasts of Nero and Heliogabalus were not typical of Imperial Rome—they were the exaggerations and excesses of eccentrics, and were, no doubt, strongly disapproved of by their contemporaries.

Culinary practice, however, was carried almost to the level of a fine art ; one achievement of Roman cooks, for instance, was to dress pork and give it the flavour of any other description of meat they chose. Similarly they counterfeited fish and flesh with vegetable preparations. These were praiseworthy achievements ; but what can be said of their practice of slaughtering young pigs with red-hot spits, so that the blood might not be lost?

The old English way of preparing brawn was to confine a young boar in a small space at harvest-time, and feed him on sweet whey till Christmas, by which time, owing to his continual lying on sweet straw, which was changed every morning, he had become fat, sweet, and wholesome. When thus brawned to a turn, as the old writer says, a knife was thrust into one of his flanks, and he was allowed to run about till he died. This sounds bad enough, but we are assured that in ancient times the Roman cooks thrust a hot iron into the boar's side and then ran him to death, thinking thereby that his flesh waxed tenderer and his brawn firmer.

The pig, it will be seen, provided no inconsiderable proportion of the flesh food used by the Romans. Their dish called the "Trojan pig" saw the animal brought to table whole, in a lifelike attitude, the garnishing of the dish being arranged to heighten the effect. Sucking pigs were eaten to such an extent that the censors were at last obliged to interdict their use.

Bacon was a food of great utility among the Romans before the days of their unruly luxury, when it was relegated to the soldiers and proletarians. The Roman women made excellent black puddings and sausage in imitation of those of Greece.

The cock, always honoured as a warlike bird, did not at first enjoy a high culinary reputation in Rome. And when that tyrant of the kitchen, C. Fannius,

the Consul, thought that hens, owing to the enormous consumption of them, would soon become extinct, he ordered that for the future Romans should dispense with fattening and eating this delicious table bird. But the law said nothing about cocks, a silence which saved Roman gastronomy, for the capon was invented.

Upon this, Rome was moved to transports of delight, and spread the fame of the skilful enchanter who could metamorphose the clarion of the farm-yard into the plump, tender, and delicious bird beloved of the epicure. Even Fannius himself, when served with a roast capon, bestowed his praises on the prodigy ; and from that period nearly all chickens underwent the ingenious transformation which rendered them so welcome at all Lucullian tables.

Lucullus had a number of supper-rooms in his palace, each distinguished by the name of some deity who was supposed to preside over the feast, and to each of which a particular style was appropriated, and always kept in a certain state of readiness. When he sent word to his servants that he would sup in the Apollo, it was a sign to them to prepare the most sumptuous entertainment his mansion could yield. A single meal in this room never cost less than 50,000 denarii, upwards of £1,000. This great Roman has derived more celebrity from the inordinate magnificence of his luxury than from his victories over Mithridates. Even during his campaigns the pleasures of the table were never neglected by him. As is well known, he was the first to introduce the cherry into Italy.

Livy, writing of the later and luxurious Rome, says :—

“ Then was a cook the most useful slave that could be, and began to be much esteemed and valued, and, all bedabbled with broth and bedaubed with soot, was welcomed out of the kitchen into the

schools ; and that which before was accounted as a vile slavery was honoured as an art whose chiefest care is only to search out everywhere the provocatives of appetite, and study in all places for dainties to satisfy a most profound gluttony ! abundance of which Gellius cites out of Varro, as the peacock from Samos, the Phrygian turkey, cranes from Melos, Ambracian kids, the Tartesian mullet, trouts from Pessenuntium, Tarterine oysters, crabs from Chios, Tatian nuts, Egyptian dates, and Iberian chestnuts."

Though the Romans inherited all the luxury of Greece and Asia, they never erected a temple to Addephagia, Goddess of Good Cheer. There were altars to this deity in Sicily, from which place Rome imported her best cooks.

Another great nation of antiquity, the Egyptians, though they venerated quite a number of animals, cannot be claimed as vegetarians.

An Egyptian painting of still life in the British Museum represents a shoulder of veal, and a goose, plucked and trussed, ready for the spit, lying on a table tastefully decked with flowers and fruit. Goose was a favourite dish with the Egyptians, but as their religion forbade them to eat onions, they could never have known the real toothsome-ness of the bird cooked with that very necessary adjunct to roast goose. For, as the oracle of the kitchen has declared :—

"All cooks agree in this opinion—
No savoury dish without an onion."

Again, one of the paintings on the tomb of Rameses III., at Thebes, represents the interior of an Egyptian kitchen, in which are seen cooks busily engaged roasting, boiling, basting, skimming the pot, blowing the fire, pounding spices in a mortar, and performing all the multifarious duties of a cook. All this points to the attainment, at an early date, of a fairly high level of achievement in the practice of the

culinary art, Rameses III. being generally acknowledged as the Pharaoh of the Exodus—say fifteen centuries before the Christian era.

To a peculiar custom of the ancient Egyptians, which is thus described by Herodotus, we may trace the origin of the well-known phrase which alludes to “the skeleton at the feast” :—

“After their convivial banquets, among the wealthy classes, when they have finished supper, a man carries round in a coffin the image of a dead body carved in wood, made as like as possible in colour and workmanship, and in size generally about two cubits in length ; and showing this to each of the company, he says : ‘ Look upon this, then drink and enjoy yourself ; for when dead you will be like this. This practice they have at their drinking parties.’”

Although the later history of Rome exhibits the Latins as brutally carnivorous—some of their culinary atrocities were of a nature which renders mention of them in these pages quite impossible—evidence is not lacking of a strong leaning to vegetarianism. Grey peas were sold at the circus and theatres, and though the price was low, they were regarded as tasty and desirable food ; candidates for public employment distributed them gratuitously among the people in order to obtain their suffrages. The Roman voluptuaries, too, invented most astonishing ragouts of mushrooms and pot-herbs. Of the early history of vegetable foods the study of geonics affords many interesting details. Room may be found for a few items relating to the better known ones which have been in the service of man from the earliest times to the present.

In the happy simplicity of the Homeric ages, the great heroes who dealt such terrible blows, leaving death and desolation behind them, reposed after their exploits, partaking of a dish of beans or a plate of peas. It may perhaps be difficult to realise a picture

of Patrocles peeling onions or of Achilles washing cabbages. Though the wise Ulysses roasted, with his own hands, a sirloin of beef, vegetables occupied the most conspicuous places at all the great banquets of ancient Greece. The Romans, too, had such liking for leguminous plants that their most illustrious families did not disdain to borrow their names from them. The appellations Fabius, Cicero, and Lentulus thus enhanced the humble renown of beans (*faba*), peas (*cicer arietinum*), and lentils (*lenticula*). Cicero, it is related of the great orator, one day gave the preference to a dish of beetroot, instead of oysters and lampreys, of which he was passionately fond. The lentil derived its name from *lentus* (slow), because it was believed the moisture in this pea produced heaviness of mind, and rendered men deliberate and reserved, if not, indeed, indolent and lazy.

The Greeks honoured King Miletus as the inventor of grinding-stones ; the upper part, as used by them, was of wood, and armed with the heads of iron nails. A passage of Homer, it is interesting to note, would lead us to believe that the grain was first crushed with roller on iron slabs and afterwards milled between the grinding-stones. Two centuries before the Christian era the victorious Romans carried with them into Asia their handmills ; soon after this the nobler conquest of industry gave them mills obedient to the power of horses or asses. They then set up, as the patroness and protectress of mills and mill-stones, the goddess Mola, whom they honoured on June 9th, upon which day all mills were silent throughout the land.

Bread was invented either by the Egyptians or the Hebrews. The Greeks are said to have had more than fifty varieties of bread, and it was from them the Romans learnt the art of making it.

Parsley formed the crown with which Hercules, as conqueror of the Nemæan lion, crowned himself ; Anacreon celebrates it as the emblem of joy and festivity ; Horace commanded his banqueting-hall to be decorated with parsley and roses. Fable makes parsley the food of Juno's coursers ; the warriors of Homer fed their chargers with it for battle. While its strong, penetrating odour was supposed to excite the brain to agreeable imaginations—which explains its being worn by guests round their heads—parsley was also the symbol of mourning admitted at the dismal repasts of obsequies.

The cabbage was adored by the Egyptians, who raised altars to it. Afterwards they made this strange god the first dish in their repasts. The Greeks and Romans ascribed to it the happy quality of preserving from drunkenness ; and Erasistratus looked upon it as a sovereign remedy against paralysis.

The leek, national emblem of gallant little Wales, has a long and strange history. By the Egyptians this vegetable was dreaded as a powerful divinity ; as a food it was bewailed by the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness ; as a medicine it was supposed by the Greeks to cure quite a number of diseases. There is a tradition that its seeds will amalgamate in germination ; that if as many of them as can be taken up with three fingers be placed in a piece of linen, covered with manure, and watered with care, they will form themselves into a single seed and in due season produce a monstrous leek.

Europe is indebted to Alexander the Great for the haricot. It happened one day that the great conqueror was herbalising in India—worthy pupil of Aristotle—and his eye fell upon a field of haricots, which appeared to him to be very inviting. It was

the first time he had seen this plant, and he ordered his cook to prepare a dish of its beans—we do not know with what sauce, but he thought them so good that Macedonia was soon enriched with a new vegetable.

Alexander found the onion in Egypt, where the Hebrews had learned to like it. He had it cultivated in Greece, and given as food to his troops, in the belief that it excited martial ardour. Whoever wishes to preserve his health, said an ancient saw, should eat every morning, before breakfast, young onions and honey. This sounds rather sensible, though not very tempting to the man of ordinary tastes. Next to salt, onion is the most valuable seasoning in cookery.

The still more pungent garlic was cultivated from the earliest age; it formed part of the rations of the Egyptian pyramid-builders, and it was given to the Roman soldiers as an excitant.

Of the succulent asparagus Asia is said to be the native soil. Yet the Romans cultivated it with such marvellous success that the sticks raised at Ravenna are said to have weighed three pounds each, while we are asked to believe that the African variety, grown in Libya, reached a height of twelve feet. Manifestly, there was no need for the ancients to bundle up their asparagus into hundreds, as our puny, shrivelled variety has now to be prepared for market. Yet it must have boiled quickly, as the simile commonly used by Augustus for rapidity of execution was, "Quicker than asparagus cooks."

The truffle, pearl of banquets, "sown by the thunderbolts in the autumnal storms," was known to the ancients. The Romans were as fond of it as the Greeks, and that was not a little. This precious fungus grows in clusters under the roots of young trees, and is traced by the gluttonous

instincts of pigs, or by trained dogs. In the sandy soils of South-west France truffles vegetate at a depth of five or six inches—Perigueux and Carpentras are the most famous districts.

The Emperor Claudius had a strong predilection for mushrooms: he was poisoned with them, by Agrippina, his niece and fourth wife; but as the poison only made him sick, he sent for Xenophon, his physician, who, pretending to give him one of the emetics he commonly used after debauches, caused a poisoned feather to be passed into his throat.

Nero used to call mushrooms the relish of the gods, because Claudius, his predecessor, having been, as was supposed, poisoned by them, was, after his death, ranked among the gods.

To Mithridates, King of Pontus, of toxicologic memory, and better known by physicians than gardeners, we owe the delights of the sweet cherry. This ancient king and philosopher did not pass the whole of his time in composing poisons and their antidotes; for with his own royal hands he planted, and sometimes grafted, this useful fruit-tree. Three hundred years before the Christian era the cultivated cherry passed from Lower Asia into Greece. This fruit enriched the second course in Athens and the third in Rome; the ancients appreciated it more highly than we do nowadays. Pliny credits Lucullus with bringing the cherry into Italy about seventy years before the Christian era, and the Romans introduced it into Britain. The name "cherry," or "cerise," is derived from that of the town Cerasus, in Asia Minor, where it is supposed to have been first cultivated.

Throughout antiquity the olive was regarded as venerable, and, of all useful fruits, the most nourishing. The wise Minerva gave it birth; and its foliage, which adorned the brows of the goddess,

served thenceforth to crown victory, or to give rise to the sweet hopes of peace. A green bough of olive rendered the suppliant inviolable. From its wood were made the arrows of Hercules, the sceptres of princes, and the crooks of shepherds. Among the Jews, the most important culture was that of the olive-tree. They not only used the olives to make oil, they also preserved them in brine to be eaten at tables. In ancient Rome olives made their appearance in the first course, and sometimes they were served again after the repast, with the dessert. Olives used as *hors d'œuvres* clear the palate. Three varieties are now in use, Italian, French, and Spanish ; those imported from Spain are the largest and most esteemed. Olive-oil largely takes the place of butter in the warmer countries of Europe. The Roman partiality for oil in their cooking still remains with the modern Italian.

Here our catalogue must terminate. Though the list is by no means exhausted, it probably includes the chief vegetable foodstuffs which have been longest, and still remain, in the service of civilised man.

In conclusion, it is significant to note that man, at quite an early period of his civilisation, succumbed to the disorders of the alimentary system ; for we find the ancient Greeks eating ripe blackberries under the impression that they were a sovereign preventive of gout.

V.

A ROMAN BANQUET

Roman meals—"From the egg to the apples"—The dining-room, or *cœnaculum*—The classical sideboard—Tables—The *sigma*—Dining-couches—Guests on arrival—Dining-ropes—The domestic servants—The departure of guests—The elegance of the entertainment—Smollet's burlesque dinner—A pedantic host and his cook—A course with a pungent odour—Ludicrous efforts with the *triclinia*—The host describes his dishes—*Sal ammoniac* and other strange edibles—Precipitate disasters at table.

WHEN not asleep, the Romans sometimes breakfasted at three or four in the morning, generally on a little bread and cheese, or some dried fruit. The more sober citizens took a slight collation, consisting, perhaps, of a little bread and a few figs, towards midday. But as most of them seldom failed to give themselves up to the pleasures of the table once a day, they reserved their best efforts for the solemn hour of the banquet.

Cicero relates that the philosopher Plato appeared to be very much astonished when, travelling in Italy, he noticed that the inhabitants ate twice a day. Later, in the days of their grossest luxury, the Romans took five meals a day and ate voraciously at each. These were a breakfast, a kind of luncheon, then another meal between that and their supper, which was the chief meal, and which was followed by



A ROMAN BANQUET. A GLADIATORIAL FIGHT FORMING THE ENTERTAINMENT.

(From a drawing by H. Young, of Glasgow, by kind permission of the Universal Cookery and Food Association, C. Herman Senn, Esq., Managing Director.)

something sweet called *commissatio*. Their feasts commenced with light food, such as eggs, oysters, &c., and concluded with a dessert of fruit, whence arose the phrase *ab ovo usque ad mala*, "from the egg to the apples"—that is, from the beginning to the end.

The principal repast, which in the later centuries of Rome's history developed a culinary monomania, and produced those follies and extravagances of the table which are almost incredible, took place at the end of the day. It will be remembered that the Jews, as we read in the New Testament, supped at the ninth hour—that is, at three o'clock in the afternoon, and that this meal was the most important of the day. We at once recall that Herod made a supper to his lords, that "a certain man made a great supper," and, above all, there was "the Last Supper."

It was the Roman *cæna*, or supper, which called forth all the exertions of the Roman cook.

The Roman dining-room (*cænaculum*) was in the upper part of the house, and reached by an ample staircase. It was commonly decorated with trophies of arms and other mementoes of the warlike virtues of the ancestors of the master of the house; the wall spaces were occupied by charming frescoes; the floor of elegant mosaic-work harmonised with the magnificent landscape painted on the ceiling. When the tables were spread, garlands of fresh flowers were entwined and festooned about the apartment.

The buffet, a sort of sideboard of rare workmanship, generally stood opposite the entrance door. It sometimes consisted of a single foot supporting a white marble table, having above it two elegant shelves upon which plates and dishes were arranged. Or sometimes the artistic fabricator gave it the whimsical form of a ship laden with the vases for the banquet; four enormous *amphoræ*, or wine-

vessels, occupying the deck on two sides of the mast, a candelabrum standing at the prow, and a large-bellied *cantharus*, or goblet-like vase with mobile handles, being placed on the stern; the main topmast would be replaced by a large urn, and two cups of Bacchus would be gracefully balanced at either extremity of the yard, along which were suspended the craters or vases used in drinking wine.

The room was heated, when necessary, by the flues from the hypocaust, but portable braziers were always ready for use; the artificial lighting was obtainable from oil lamps, or from candles, or from torches of sweet-smelling resinous wood.

The tables were of wood, or of bronze, or sometimes of fine silver, according to the social position of the entertainer. Some nobles and senators used tables made of precious woods, veneered with plates of gold, or enriched with buhlwork of ivory and shell. These splendid pieces of furniture were at first square, then rounded in a crescent or horseshoe shape, which they called a *sigma*, from the Greek letter resembling (in shape) our "c." The guests whom the host wished to honour most were placed at the extremities of this hemicycle.

The opulent used a number of tables, which they changed at each course, though the less luxuriant changed only twice, the fish and flesh appearing on the first and the fruit being served on the second. According as they rested on one, two, or three feet (generally fashioned as lion's claws) they were designated monopedes, bipedes, and tripedes. They were cleaned with a sponge and a thick plushed linen cloth.

In humble life the table was of common wood, resting on three plain legs. The table of the well-to-do citizen might be of maple or some similar wood, supported on one leg, perhaps embellished with an

ivory foot. Three couches at most (*triclinia*) were arranged round this rectangular form of table, sometimes only two (*biclinia*). Good Society never exceeded the number four.

In reclining, the upper part of the body was supported by the left elbow ; the lower part was extended at length. The head was slightly raised, and soft cushions supported the back. When several persons occupied the same couch, the first placed himself at the head in such a manner that his feet nearly reached the shoulders of the second guest, whose head was before the body of the preceding one, from whom he was separated by a cushion.

When the couch contained three persons, the middle one occupied the place of honour ; when there were four, the distinction belonged to the second. When not more than two persons were present, the most worthy was placed at the head of the couch.

The guests on arrival performed their ablutions, threw off their togas, for which they substituted comfortable dinner robes, and then took off their sandals, preparatory to taking their places at table. Before coming to the banquet they had taken baths, and submitted themselves to the attentions of the *tonsores* (barbers) ; and they had given particular care to the cleaning of their teeth. In all these details of the toilet Roman etiquette demanded the most scrupulous degree of cleanliness. Shakespeare reminds us of one who

“Being barber’d ten times o’er, goes to the feast.”

The system of domestic slavery enabled the Romans, in the days of their magnificence, to be served at meals by a whole army of attendants.

At the head of the domestic slaves in a large household was the steward, or *dispensator*, who not

only regulated the labour but apportioned the chastisements when necessary.

Besides the attendants who were seen in the banqueting-room, there was another unseen army of them employed in the kitchen—as the cooks and their satellites, and the *focarii* (stokers) who cut the wood, lighted and kept up the fires.

The Romans had a servant—the *obsonator*, or purveyor—whose duty it was to go to market and make the necessary purchases of meat, fruit, and all the delicacies needed at the table. The *vocatores*, men selected for the office on account of their urbanity, carried the invitations, received the guests, and placed them at table according to their rank.

The valets who arranged and adorned the table-couches were called the *cubicularii*.

For the banqueting-room all arrangements were in the hands of the *triclinarii*, who directed the repast, and occupied themselves with an infinity of details in the kitchen, the cellar, the pantry, and the buffet. In the best houses there was also a taster (*prægustator*), who tried every viand before the guests were allowed to be served with it.

When the repast commenced the dishes were carried to table by the *dapiferi*; the names of the dishes and the qualities of the various things served were called out by the *nomenclatores*. An attendant, called the *structor*, arranged the dishes on the table symmetrically, and in their proper places. Then the meats were cut up by the *scissor* (or carver) to the sound of musical instruments, of which he followed the measure. Finally, the *procillatores* served the guests, pouring out their drink and paying them every attention. These cup-bearers were young slaves, generally beardless youths with a fresh complexion, and long, silky hair, falling in curls over their shoulders. They wore white tunics, confined

at the waist by a wide riband, which went twice round. Was not Ganymede, most beautiful of mortals, chosen to be cupbearer to Zeus?

Attendants of an inferior grade were the *peniculi*, or washers, who came in with sponge or cloth to clean the tables, and who sometimes assisted in the laying of the covers and the floral decoration of the room.

Nor were these all the household servants seen at a Roman banquet. While the guests were softly reclining on their table-couches other slaves, *sandaligeruli*, attended to their sandals, and fastened them on at the moment of departure. Others, *flabellarii*, armed with fans of peacocks' feathers, drove away the flies and cooled the banqueting-hall.

The banquet terminated, the guests' own servants were called upon. The *adversatores*, carrying lanterns or torches, conducted their masters home, never failing to point out the stones and other obstructions in the path, which frequent libations might prevent the diners discovering for themselves. If the haughty dame were carried to and from the feast in a palanquin, the humbler slaves assigned to this duty were the *lecticarii*.

All the servilities were performed silently and gracefully, but without undue obsequiousness; the whole entertainment was pervaded with an air of elegance and refinement, with its cloud of ministering attendants ready and watchful to anticipate every wish, to meet each requirement; the scented fountains, the profusion of rose-leaf-stuffed cushions, the playing of soft music, and all the costly appointments by which the diners were surrounded, compelled a languorousness and a sybaritic indulgence that must, in the inevitable result, have been enervating, and altogether unworthy of a once virile and warlike nation.

This bare outline of the Roman etiquette of dining will serve to introduce a more vivid and picturesque account of a dinner "after the manner of the ancients," which is supposed to be given at a time when, at least, the dress of the diners would be as dissimilar as possible from that worn by the Romans at dinner. To eat gracefully in a reclining position, when clad in loose, flowing drapery, was easy of accomplishment; to attempt the same feat encumbered in costumes of stiff brocades and embroideries, and above all with heads encased in monstrous powdered wigs, would be highly ludicrous.

When classicalism ran riot in this country in the eighteenth century, dominating English architecture, education, art, and literature, and intruding itself in various ways into the luxurious living of the rich, little wonder some one should satirise the craze when it threatened to become a feature of English cookery.

It is thus we find, in one chapter of "Peregrine Pickle," Smollett remorselessly burlesquing an ancient Roman dinner. The hero, on his travels, comes across two of his countrymen in Paris—a doctor, who assumes an air of profound learning and is extremely pedantic, and an artist, who is almost devoid of culture. Peregrine cultivates their acquaintance in order to amuse himself with them.

The doctor pretended, above all things, to have intimate acquaintance with the Greek and Roman writers; indeed, he affected a deep reverence for everything ancient. Pickle having given his new friends a good dinner at his lodgings, the doctor returned the compliment by inviting him to a grand banquet which he pompously proposed, in his sham enthusiasm, to prepare after the manner of the ancient Romans.

Young Pickle saw the possibilities of great fun, and to enhance the diversion bespoke the company

of a French marquis, an Italian count, and a German baron, all of whom he knew to be egregious cox-combs. When they arrived at the hotel they were received by Pallet, the painter, the doctor being busily engaged with the cook. Five cooks had already been dismissed because they positively refused to comply with the doctor's orders, and violate all the canons of their art. The sixth was only prevailed upon to carry out his employer's orders by the payment of a heavy premium, and even he now begged to be relieved from the terms of his agreement, capering about the kitchen for two hours, protesting, cursing, and weeping, but finding the doctor inexorable.

Presently the doctor appeared, and after the usual compliments, dinner was announced. Then the diversion commenced, though it is to be feared Smollett rather burlesques the scene. The entertainer, says the novelist, led the way into the apartment where the table was spread and already furnished with a variety of dishes, the steams of which soon showed an effect upon the nerves of the company; the marquis made frightful grimaces under pretence of taking snuff; the Italian's eye watered; the German's visage underwent several contortions of feature; Peregrine tried to exclude the odour by breathing only through his mouth; as to the poor painter, he had to run back into the other room and plug his nostrils.

The doctor, who was the only person not discomposed, pointing to a couple of couches placed on each side of the table, told his guests he was sorry he could not procure the exact *triclinia* of the ancients, which were somewhat different from these conveniences, and desired they would have the goodness to repose themselves without ceremony, each on his respective couchette, while he and his friend

Mr. Pallet would place themselves upright at the ends, that they might have the pleasure of serving.

As none of them understood the ancient manner of lolling, it is amusing to read of the disconcerting mishaps which occurred while they were attempting to dispose themselves round the table. The perplexities, mistakes, and consequent confusion may be imagined, the awkward and painful postures, the disarrangement of stiff, modish dress, being but minor difficulties ; the climax came when the big, unwieldy baron, in raising his heavy legs to the level of his upper limbs, brought his feet into violent contact with the head of the marquis, demolishing every one of his beautiful curls, while his own periwig was knocked off with such violence that it filled the whole room with a cloud of hair-powder. The drollery of their distress was as nothing compared with their ridiculous affectation of unconcern, as mutual apologies were tendered with elaborate politeness, and received with rueful complaisance. These misfortunes ended and the damages repaired, the meal began, the doctor undertaking to give an account of the dishes as they appeared, so that his guests might be guided in their choice.

He began : " This here, gentlemen, is a boiled goose, served up in a sauce composed of pepper, lovage, coriander, mint, rue, anchovies, and oil. I wish, for your sakes, gentlemen, it was one of the geese of Ferrara, so much celebrated among the ancients for the magnitude of their livers, one of which is said to have weighed upwards of two pounds ; with this food, exquisite as it was, did the tyrant Heliogabalus regale his hounds. But I beg pardon, I had almost forgot the soup, which I hear is so necessary an article at all tables in France.

" At each end there are dishes of the *salacabilia* of the Romans ; one is made of parsley, pennyroyal, cheese, pine-tops, honey, vinegar, brine, eggs, cucumbers, onions, and hen-livers ; the other is much the same as the *soup-maigre* of this country. Then there is a loin of boiled veal with fennel and carraway seed, on a pottage composed of pickle, oil, honey, and flour, and a curious hash of the lights, liver, and blood of a hare, together with a dish of roasted pigeons."

The guests who tempered their politeness with discretion and chose wisely, like Peregrine, escaped disaster. But the unfortunate Frenchman, having asked for soup, had no sooner swallowed the first spoonful than he "made a full pause, his throat swelled as if an egg had stuck in his gullet, his eyes rolled, and his mouth underwent a series of involuntary contractions and dilations." Pallet, wishing to consult the connoisseur before venturing upon the soup, began to be disturbed by these convulsions, and observed with some emotion that the poor gentleman seemed to be going in a fit ; but the mischievous Peregrine assured him that these were symptoms of ecstasy, and found confirmation when the poor marquis recovered sufficiently to master his disgust, and asseverate on his honour that the soup was really excellent. The painter being thus certified, without further scruple lifted a spoonful to his mouth, but no sooner had the precious composition diffused itself on his palate than he seemed suddenly deprived of all sense and motion, "and sat like the leaden statue of some river, with the liquor flowing out at both sides of his mouth."

The doctor, alarmed at this indecent phenomenon, earnestly inquired into the cause of it ; and when Mr. Pallet recovered his recollection and swore that he would rather swallow brimstone than such an infernal mess as that which he had tasted, the physician, in his own vindication, assured the company that, excepting the usual ingredients, he had mixed nothing in the soup but some sal-ammoniac instead of the ancient *nitrum*, which could not now be procured, and appealed to the marquis whether such a *succedaneum* was not an improvement on the whole.

The polite Frenchman, driven to extremity, acknowledged it to be of masterly refinement ; and

feeling obliged, in point of honour, to put these sentiments into practice, forced a few more mouthfuls of the stuff down his throat, till his stomach was so much offended that he was compelled to start up all of a sudden, and in the hurry of his elevation he overturned his plate into the bosom of the baron. How the wretched sufferer rushed out of the room, in too great extremity to apologise; how Peregrine followed, aided in his recovery, and undertook to make his peace with the rest of the company; how the outraged baron, frantic with indignation, stamped and cursed as his lackey wiped the grease from his rich embroidered waistcoat must be read in the original. Peregrine, scarce hiding his suppressed merriment, managed with consummate tact to restore peace.

The unhappy *salacacabia* being removed, the places were filled with two pies—one of dormice, liquored with the syrup of white poppies, which the doctor had substituted in the room of toasted poppy-seed, formerly eaten with honey, as a dessert; and the other composed of a hock of pork baked in honey.

The irreverent painter, upon hearing the composition of the first-named, exclaimed, "Lord in heaven! what beastly fellows those Romans were." The baron imitated the example of his host, and partook of the veal, after having called for a bumper of burgundy, which the doctor wished to have been the true wine of Falernum. Pallet also had recourse to this dish, but could not refrain from declaring that he would not give one slice of the roast beef of old England for all the dainties of a Roman emperor's table.

Not a single guest could be prevailed upon to try the hashis and the goose; and on their removal they were succeeded by divers dishes which the host told them obtained among the ancients the appellation of *politeles*, or magnificent.

“That which smokes in the middle,” said he, “is a sow’s stomach, filled with a composition of minced pork, hog’s brains, pepper, cloves, garlic, aniseed, rue, ginger, oil, wine, and pickle. On the right-hand side are the teats of a belly of a sow, just farrowed, fried with sweet wine, oil, flour, lovage, and pepper. On the left is a fricassee of snails, fed, or rather purged, with milk. At that end, next Mr. Pallet, are fritters of pompions, lovage, origanum, and oil; and here are a couple of pullets, roasted and stuffed in the manner of Apicius.”

The painter, having testified his abhorrence of the composite messes, was desired by his host to carve the fowls, whereupon he tucked the table-cloth under his chin and brandished the carving-knife and fork with singular success, leading up, though unconsciously, to the final catastrophe. No sooner had he pushed the fork in the birds than his eyes filled with tears, which presently streamed down his cheeks, as though his nostrils had been assailed by the essence of a whole bed of garlick. But when he thrust in his knife and opened up the cavity, he was assaulted by such an irruption of intolerable smells that, without staying to disengage himself from the cloth, he sprang away with an exclamation, and instantly wrought the whole table in havoc, ruin, and confusion. Everybody round the table was involved, more or less, in the alarming catastrophe, the count being badly scalded on the leg by the sow’s stomach, which, bursting in its fall, discharged its steaming contents over him.

The poor count had to have his injuries dressed at once, and the painter did not dare to return till he had made his apologies by proxy. The doctor, after his shame and vexation had subsided, protested that there was nothing in the fowls which could give offence to a sensible nose, the stuffing being a mixture of pepper, lovage, and asafoetida, and the sauce consisting of wine and herring pickle, which he had used instead of the celebrated *garum* of the Romans, that famous pickle having been prepared

sometimes from the *scrombi*, which was a sort of tunny-fish, and sometimes from the *silurus* or shad-fish ; nay, he observed that there was a third kind, called *garum hæmation*, made of the guts, gills, and blood of the *thynnus*.

It being impossible to re-establish the order of the banquet, a clean cloth was laid, and the dessert ordered to be brought in. Meanwhile, the doctor regretted his inability to give them a specimen of the *alieus*, or fish-meals of the ancients—such as the *jus diabaton*, the conger-eel which, in Galen's opinion, is hard of digestion ; the *cornuta*, or gurnard, described in the Natural History of Pliny, who says the horns of many of them were a foot and a half in length ; the mullet and lamprey, that were in the highest estimation of old, of which last Julius Cæsar borrowed six thousand for one triumphal supper.

Proceeding with his discourse, the irrepressible doctor observed that the manner of dressing them was described by Horace in the account which he gives of the entertainment to which Mæcenas was invited by the epicure Nasiedenus, and told them that they were commonly eaten with the *thus Syriacum*, a certain anodyne and astringent seed which qualified the purgative nature of the fish. In the zenith of the Roman taste it was reckoned a most luxurious dish, though not comparable to some in vogue when that absurd voluptuary, Heliogabalus, ordered the brains of six hundred ostriches to be compounded in one mess.

But what the exuberant master of the feast valued himself upon when the dessert arrived was a sort of jelly, which he affirmed to be preferable to the *hypotrimma* of Hesychius, being a mixture of vinegar, pickle, and honey, boiled to a proper consistence, and candied asafoetida, a gum which was always so highly considered by the ancients.

And so the learned physician descanted at large while the champagne was gradually wiping out the recollection of the *contretemps* which had marked his ill-starred attempt to revive the culinary triumphs of ancient Rome.

Let it be borne in mind that Tobias Smollett was himself a Doctor of Medicine. And it is quite apparent that he had studied Apicius, for his description of the dish of sow's stomach—which, by the way, we now eat, when properly boiled, as chitterlings—is according to the true Apician method, though it is to be feared the novelist works out the idea with a somewhat farcical extravagance. And it should not be overlooked that cookery was formerly regarded as the best form of medicine ; hence the frequent use in olden times of medicinal plants as pot-herbs, judiciously selected and blended, as they were astringent or purgative, or possessed of other corrective virtues. It must have required a Spartan stomach, however, to have tolerated the employment in culinary matters, as the Romans did, of that ultra-fetid gum, asafœtida.

The moral of Smollett's laughable account of the exploits of his culinary sage seems to be that "too many cooks spoil the broth."

VI

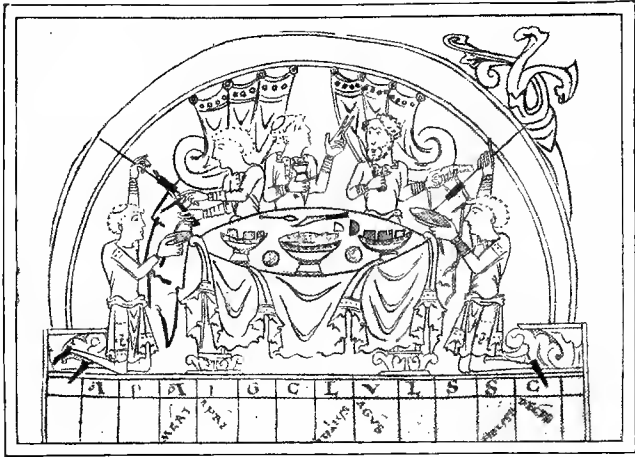
EARLY ENGLISH FARE

Ancient Britons' dietary—Druidical orgies—Saxon intemperance—Danish excesses—"Hogg-tide"—A Saxon dinner—The Norman housewife—Dainty feeding—Change of habit—Saxon animals and Norman meats—Cedric, an English franklin—His household and hospitality—Norman royal household—The "feast bearer"—An era of profusion—Thirteenth-century vegetable foods—Indigenous fruits—Imported fruits, wines, sugar, and spicery—A tariff of provisions—Prodigious consumption of fish—Yarmouth herring pies—Gloucester lamprey pie.

IN the words of the national bard, "I have good cheer at home, and I pray you go along with me." Which is an invitation to the study of the culinary history of our own country, a task surely not without its allurements to a people which has always, from days of old to the present time, boasted themselves mighty trenchermen.

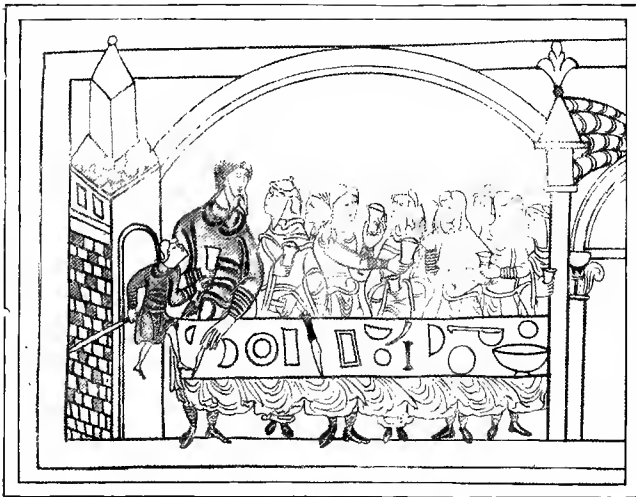
The early Britons, according to the testimony of Diodorus Siculus, were remarkably simple in their diet. The grain they cultivated in little patches was reduced to paste in a mortar, and formed their chief article of food. Practically the only additions to the table were milk and flesh.

On great and solemn occasions, however, as in times of public calamity, an unnatural feast was celebrated. The Druids enjoined the immolation of certain victims to excite, or to appease, one of their multifarious deities. A venerable Druid, perhaps trembling himself at the awful rites he was about to perform, led the silent flock into the secret recesses



ANGLO-SAXON DINNER PARTY AT A ROUND TABLE.

From an old MS.



ANGLO-SAXON DINNER PARTY AT A LONG TABLE.

From an old MS.

of the sacred groves of oak. There, at the dark hour of midnight, the human offering was brought forth and adorned for the altar. At the fatal sign the consecrated dagger was plunged into the victim's heart. The body was then laid open, the entrails examined, and the augury pronounced. Finally the bloody butchers sat down to their horrid feast, each one without exception religiously partaking of the human sacrifice. These awful orgies were celebrated with weird rites and the mysteries of an esoteric religion, in the deep and gloomy recesses of the primeval forest.

Our Saxon progenitors were by no means a temperate people. They frequently passed a whole night in feasting and carousing. They prepared for the Battle of Hastings by feasting and gorging. With habits of debauchery, their fare was but homely. An old Saxon illumination of a feast shows three persons seated at a table, and two others on their knees serving them. The banquet consists of a large fish, on a kind of dish in the middle, and two other dishes, apparently containing boiled meat and broth, on either side. The attendants seem to hold spits in their hands (each having a gravy dish), from which one of the seated figures is cutting a portion. Another seated figure, with a fish in his left hand, is being pledged by the figure in the middle, who is drinking from a goblet. The table is covered with a cloth, on which are trenchers, probably of white maple-wood ; a spoon, also of wood ; and a knife of the usual Saxon razor-shape, with a point that might possibly serve the office of a picker or fork. The round table denotes a private or family dinner party ; the long table a public dinner, at which also the pledging of healths was an important part of the business.

The dominion of the Danes in this country tended to increase the excesses of eating and drinking to

which the Saxons were already too much addicted. By their religion the Danes were led to hope for a glorious immortality, spent in feasting and intoxication. Hardicanute, the last of the Danish line who swayed the sceptre of England, was famous for his bounty and hospitality. Four times a day his tables were spread, at which all were welcome, invited guests and any friends they cared to bring with them. Hardicanute fell a victim to his excesses, being seized with a fit while present at a wedding feast at Lambeth, from the effects of which he died in a few days. The anniversary of the royal glutton's death was long celebrated under the appropriate name of Hogg-tide. An ancient chronicle says he never would

"be served with ony like metes of one meale in another," and that "chaunge and diversitie was dayly in greate habundance"; that he "caused cunynge cooks in curiositie; also he was the furst that began four meales stablyshed in oon day, opynly to be holden for worshupfull and honest peopull resorting to his Court . . . for which four melys he ordeyned four marshalls, to kepe the honor of his halle, in recevyng and dyrecting straungers."

The Anglo-Dane's ideas of hospitality were truly regal!

A Saxon dinner has been thus described in a work entitled "Sea Kings in England":—

"The dining-table was oblong, and rounded at the ends. The cloth was a rich crimson, with a broad gilt margin, and hung low beneath the table. The company sat upon chairs, with concave backs, and were arranged much as at the present day, with the view that to each of the ladies should be assigned a neighbour of the other sex. . . . The dishes consisted of fowls and fish, of the flesh of oxen, sheep, deer, and swine, both wild and domestic, not excepting certain portions of the sea swine, or porpoise—a food not at present much in repute, but at that period no unfrequent article of diet. There were two *sanda*, or dishes, of *sodden syflian*, or soup bouilli, and one of *seathen*, or boiled goose. The bread was of the finest wheaten flour, and lay in two silver baskets upon the table. Almost the only vegetable in use among the Saxons was kale wort; and the only condiments were salt and pepper. These various

articles were boiled, baked, or broiled, and were handed by the attendants upon small spits to the company. . . . The diners made use of their fingers to eat with, but for the sake of cleanliness each person was provided with a small silver ewer containing water and two flowered napkins of the finest linen. Their dessert consisted of grapes, figs, nuts, apples, pears, and almonds."

The well-to-do Saxon trader lived in great comfort. He was absolute master in his own house, but the household was directed by his wife. Everything was made in the house; the flour was ground, the bread was baked, the meat and fish were salted. These were the staple foods.

In the Norman period the good housewife might keep her pantry and her larder well victualled in advance, but fresh beef and mutton were still scarce. Very little venison or other game found its way to their tables, the Game Laws being so exceedingly strict. In the London cookshops boiled and roast meats, and fish and poultry and game in season, might be bought by those who had the money to pay for them.

The Normans introduced into this country a system of cookery of a comparatively high class, though as the centuries rolled on the tradition of this school became obscured, and gave way to a coarser style of heavy feeding. No doubt the tables of the early Norman kings displayed a profuse quantity of food, but despite the occasional use of coarse material, the excellence of the cookery threw into the shade the efforts of later epochs.

The Normans were dainty eaters, epicures, and therefore their cooking was nice. Rich spices were plentifully used. Among the grand dishes provided on great occasions were the boar's head, and the peacock, served to the blare of trumpets, with much ceremonial—of which more anon. A dish of cranes was a favourite dish on the table of a baron.

Simnel and wastel cakes and spice-bread were among the usual dainties. Wastel was a fine, well-baked white bread next in quality to simnel, a rich cake generally made in a three-cornered shape.

The daily routine of a Norman household is seen in the rhyme of the period :—

“To rise at five, to dine at nine,
To sup at five, to bed at nine,
Makes a man live to ninety-and-nine.”

This shows a remarkable change in manners, because the Saxons had four heavy meals during the day. Another striking change effected by the Conquest in domestic arrangements was that new names were given to certain articles of food.

While alive, animals reared and fattened for food retained their Saxon names, being tended by Saxon servants ; but when they were killed and cooked and brought to table, they were dignified with Norman names. It was in this way an ox became *beef*; a calf, *veal*; a sheep, *mutton*; a sow, *pork*; a deer, *venison*, and a fowl, *pullet*. Bacon retained its Saxon name because the Normans despised it. In “Ivanhoe” we read : “Swine is called pork when carried to the castle hall to feed the nobles” ; but the inference that the swineherd never tasted pig is wrong, for it formed his principal, if not his only, flesh food.

“Old Alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon title while he is under the charge of serfs and bondsmen ; but becomes Beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him.

Whether we regard Cedric as a Saxon thane or an English franklin the description of the evening meal in his mansion, as given by Scott in the third and fourth chapters of “Ivanhoe,” affords a useful insight into the rude simplicity of the period.

The hall is described as having a dais and a T-shaped table ; to the elevated portion of the table, the seats are massive chairs and settles of oak, over which hangs a canopy of cloth to protect the dignitaries who occupy them from wind and weather. The two chairs in the centre of the upper table, more elevated than the rest, are for the master and mistress who preside over the hospitality, and who, from doing so, derived their Saxon titles of honour—" Lord " and " Lady "—which signifies " the Dividers of Bread." To each of these chairs is also added, as a further mark of distinction, a carved footstool. The higher attendants at the table include a major-domo, who carries a white wand, and a cup-bearer ; among the minor domestics are pages and torch-bearers.

When guests suddenly arrived (as is set forth in the romance) they were honoured with seats near the host and hostess, and the oldest wine-cask was immediately broached. The other beverages with which the drinking-horns of the lower table and the silver goblets of the upper were filled, included sparkling cider, the mightiest ale, the best mead, the richest morat (a drink made of honey flavoured with the juice of mulberries) and odoriferous pigment (a rich liquor composed of wine, highly spiced, and sweetened with honey). As one of the visitors is a prior, he is courteously asked if he would prefer the acid preparation of milk demanded by his monastic rule ; to which he graciously replies that it is only at the abbey table that he has to restrict himself to the *lac dulce* or the *lac acidum*. The other visitor, being a gallant knight, drinks wassail to the fair ward of his host. Thus are the interesting customs of the time pleasantly introduced to our notice. Then as to the viands with which the board was spread, we read that at the lower table appeared

swine's flesh dressed in several modes ; that the other dishes at the meal comprised "fowls, deer, goats, and hares, and various kind of fish, together with huge loaves and cakes of bread, and sundry confections made of fruits and honey."

"The smaller sorts of wild fowl, of which there was an abundance, were not served up in platters" (says the great romancer) "but brought in upon small wooden spits or broaches, and offered by the pages and domestics, who bore them to each guest in succession, who cut from them such a portion as he pleased."

But when, presently, a Jew traveller arrives, the hospitality of the house, though not refused to the outcast infidel, is tendered less warmly—he is allowed to sup apart from the great table, on a mess of pottage and seethed kid. Even a boundless hospitality may be narrowed by religious intolerance.

The whole extract is interesting and informative.

The Conqueror, with whom the crane was a prime favourite, was given to indulgence at the table, which induced that unwieldy corpulence which was the indirect cause of his death. His kitchen was an expensive part of his household, in which the principal officer, the *magnus coquus* (chief cook), was a person of considerable account.

With the Norman Conquest came an increase in the royal dignity, the Norman Court being better planned than the royal household of Anglo-Saxon times. Both these had grown out of the German idea of the household, with its reeve, dish-thane, cup-bearer, and staller ; but in the Conqueror's household these domestic officers had been supplemented by many others. Household departments in his English palace were multiplied, to each of which was appointed an official head, whose office tended to become hereditary and one of dignity only. This is to be recognised in the titles still borne by a number of the royal household officials. The Steward

of England, now "the first officer of State," was, in far-away feudal times, the chief server at the royal repast.

All the royal household offices were presided over, at least nominally, by the highest of the king's men ; but they certainly delegated to others the active services they did not care to perform personally. We must not accept literally the legend of the Colchester monks that their earl became dapifer (that is, feast-bearer, or steward) because William fitz-Osbern, the King's trusted minister, served up an underdone crane before his royal master. There is probably more truth in the story of the origin of the Earl of Chester's golden wand. Four earls, the chronicler tells us, were to carry swords of state before Rufus to the great feast at Westminster Hall. Hugh, Earl of Chester, declined to carry anything, saying he was no servant. Thereupon the King offered him a golden wand, and made the bearing of it an hereditary office of dignity.

From magnificence of table ceremonial to a display of profusion was an easy step. An era of profuse hospitality set in, some notable examples of which anon.

An ancient roll containing the household expenses of the Countess of Leicester, who was a daughter of King John, and wife of the great Simon de Montfort, makes mention of the vegetable foods in use in the thirteenth century. Very few esculent plants are named—dried pease and beans, parsley, fennel and onions, green peas and new beans, complete the list, with the exception of "pot-herbs" not specified. It is known that cresses, endive, lettuce, beets, parsnips, carrots, cabbages, leeks, radishes, and cardoons were all cultivated in France as early as the days of Charlemagne, but they do not seem to have found their way into England till a

very much later period. If they did, they were unknown outside a few monastery gardens.

Apples and pears are amongst the oldest of English fruits ; and of the varieties perhaps the warden pear ranks earliest.

"Myself with denial I mortify
With—a dainty bit of warden pie,

sang the Friar of Orders Grey. Matthew Paris, describing the bad season of 1257, observes that "apples were scarce, and pears scarcer, while quinces, vegetables, cherries, plums, and shell fruit were entirely destroyed." The last named included hazelnuts, walnuts, and perhaps chestnuts. In 1256 the sheriffs of London were ordered to purchase two thousand chestnuts for the King's own use. The royal fruiterer of Edward I. included medlars with the fruits already mentioned ; but there seems a scarcity of indigenous fruits.

Among the imported fruits, and often included in the term "spicery," were almonds, dates, figs, and raisins. In the time of John, Rochelle was famous for its pears and conger-eels ; in the reign of Edward I. a Spanish ship brought to Portsmouth a cargo which included Seville figs, raisins or grapes, "a bale of dates, 230 pomegranates, 15 citrons, and 7 oranges." Two centuries later Wolsey used a dried Seville orange, stuffed with cloves, as a scent-ball, though earlier pomanders were generally filled with nutmeg, if not with musk or ambergris. While the orange was thus known in England in 1290, strangely enough it cannot be traced in France earlier than 1333.

When John, King of France, was brought captive to England, after the Battle of Poitiers (1356), he was lodged at first in the Savoy Palace, London, and afterwards transferred for greater security to

Somerton Castle, Lincolnshire. For his use, large quantities of Bordeaux wine were transmitted from France, but one of the costly items of his expenditure was for sugar. Immense quantities of sugar and spices were brought for the French King's use in London, Lincoln, and Boston, much of it used in the form of confectionery. In the household accounts of the captive King repeatedly occur sums for eggs to clarify sugar, roses to flavour it, and cochineal to colour it. The royal consumption of bon-bons and sweetmeats appears to have been remarkably large.

It was part of a Government policy in olden times to fix the prices of provisions, especially of bread, ale, and meat.

A tariff of provisions was fixed by the City of London authorities in 1272, as under, owing to the extortionate prices commonly demanded by hucksters and dealers :—

The best hen	...	...	...	...	3 half-pence
Pullet	...	...	...	...	3 "
Capon	...	...	...	...	2 "
Goose	...	...	...	...	5 "
Wild goose	...	...	...	...	4 "
Pigeons, three for	...	...	...	...	1 penny
Mallard, three for	...	...	...	...	1 halfpenny
Plover	...	...	...	...	1 penny
Partridge	...	...	...	...	3 halfpence
Larks, per dozen	...	...	...	...	1 penny halfpenny
Pheasant	...	...	...	...	4 pence
Heron	...	...	...	...	6 pence
Swan	...	...	...	...	3 shillings
Crane	...	...	...	...	3 shillings
The best peacock	...	...	...	...	1 penny
The best coney, with skin	...	...	...	...	4 pence
The best hare, with skin	...	...	...	...	3 pence halfpenny
The best lamb, from Christmas to Lent	...	...	...	...	6 pence
The best lamb, at other times of the year	...	...	...	...	4 pence.

Again, in 1290, when the price of provisions was fixed by the Common Council of London, the price

of two pullets was three halfpence, and a fat lamb sixpence, from Christmas to Shrovetide, and the rest of the year fourpence.

In 1313 Parliament fixed prices at the rate of £2 8s. of our money for a fat ox, and £3 12s. if it were fed with corn ; a shorn sheep, 5 shillings ; two dozen eggs, 3d. Two centuries later, in the reign of Henry VIII., Parliament settled the price of beef and pork at a halfpenny the pound, and veal at three-farthings.

The exchequer accounts of Edward III. show a prodigious consumption of fish, and also the strictness with which the Lenten fast was observed in the royal household. In Edwardian times herring pies were considered as delicious even by royalty. The town of Yarmouth was bound by charter to send a hundred herrings, baked in twenty-four pasties, annually to the King. Various manors were held by the tenure of a similar obligation.

Lampreys were a favourite dish of medieval epicures. So great was the demand for this fish in the reign of John, that that monarch issued a royal licence to one Sampson to go to Nantes to purchase lampreys for the eating of the Countess of Blois. The same King issued a mandate to the Sheriffs of Gloucester, that city being famous for producing lampreys, forbidding them, on their first coming in, to be sold for more than two shillings each. In 1341 the sum of £12 5s. 8d. was paid to the sheriffs for forty-four lampreys supplied for the King's use. It became customary for the corporation of Gloucester to present to the sovereign every Christmas a lamprey-pie as a token of loyalty. Gloucester was not only famous for its Severn lampreys, but for the excellence of its method of stewing them.

VII

MONASTIC CULINARY INFLUENCES

Monastic cuisine—Refectory officials—Kitchen servitors—"Carrodies" or free meals—Monastic hospitality—Large fish consumption—Prodigality—Famine calls for restriction—Ancient kitchens—Victualling a garrison—Medieval fare of the masses—Some causes of periodical famine.

THE refectories of the monasteries and the kitchens of the ecclesiastics were the strongholds of English medieval cookery. Giraldus Cambrensis informs us that the table of the monks of Canterbury consisted daily of sixteen covers of the most costly dainties, dressed with the most exquisite skill. He relates that the monks of Winchester threw themselves at the feet of Henry II. and complained with tears in their eyes that their abbot, the bishop of the diocese, had taken from them three of the usual number of their dishes. The King, however, thought they were still well off with ten, as he had to content himself with three dishes.

In the old records the chief official of the refectory department is described as *Magister Coquinæ*, and his duties seem to have been those of a purveyor of provisions, while the cook who dressed the food is called *Coquinarius*. The officer charged with the care of entertaining strangers and seeing that they were provided with necessaries was styled *Hospitarius*.

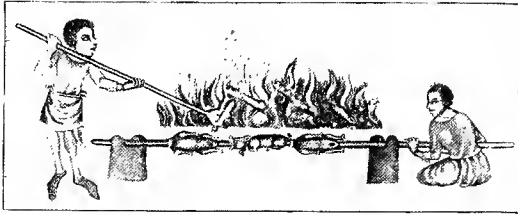
The refectorer's and cellarer's accounts in a large monastic establishment show the regular recurrence of certain items which are interesting as throwing light on a number of practices. A certain provision of beans and oats goes to provide the Lenten "gruelum." The great festivals are marked by an improved quality of the bread, and the provision of a special treat in the shape of fried cakes. The monks were bled three times a year, and special provision was then made for dieting them properly. The performance of special duties was rewarded with special feeding, as the bathers who bathed the monks at Advent, and the laundry servants, who got a monastic loaf when they washed the tablecloths.

The menial servants were under the management of the *Refectionarius*, who was also charged with the care of the tablecloths, napkins, drinking vessels, and the entire table equipment.

Then the list of servitors at a great monastery was of extraordinary length. The amount of manual labour engaged in a kitchen without mechanical appliances was necessarily large. The accompanying illustration shows that the turning of the spit was effected by the direct application of hand labour.

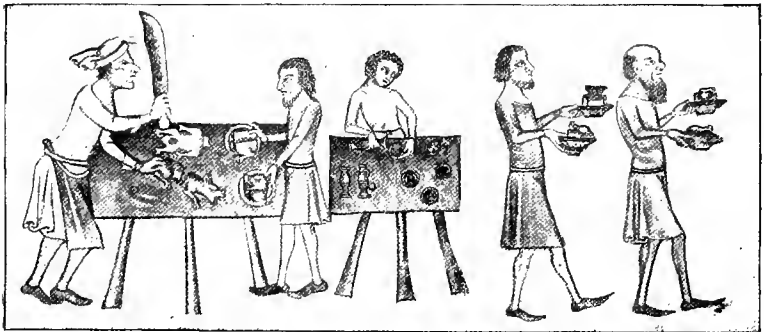
Among those whose duties have some connection with the table were the dapifer, or steward, the larderer, the abbot's cook, the monks' cook, the servants' cook, the servant of the refectorer, the servant of the cellarer, the brewer, the servant of the garden, and sometimes of the vineyard, the baker, the heater of the bakehouse, the pig-keeper, the cowman, the miller, the granaryman; and all of them had fixed carrodies in the hall, or wages in the shape of allowances of ale, bread, a ram or two, or the fruits of certain acres.

It was in these early English times that the custom known as carrodies grew up. A carrody was a grant



ROASTING, MIDDLE AGES.

Luttrell Psalter.



DISHING-UP, MIDDLE AGES.

Luttrell Psalter.

of food (and sometimes of clothing) made in the way of charity or in part payment for services ; a timid and temporising practice which ran up the expenditure of the royal, noble, and monastic households very considerably.

Perhaps that feature of monachism which most insured the favour of the people was the constant hospitality maintained at these monasteries, and which extended its invitations to every class of society, from the nobleman to the beggar. In every monastery of importance a large room or guest-hall, surrounded with sleeping apartments, was appropriated for the reception of travellers, who were allowed to remain two days and two nights as visitors, but were expected, if they continued after that time, and were in health, to conform to the rule of the house. Even in the reign of Henry VIII. inns were not frequent, and where they did exist they presented a scene of dirt and wretchedness which was scarcely tolerable even in those days of comparative indifference to cleanliness. Erasmus, who had a national susceptibility on this point, has spoken very forcibly on the miseries of an English inn at that period. It was, therefore, a most acceptable resource to travellers of all ranks to enter within the secure and commodious precincts of a monastery, where they were sure of good fare and a comfortable lodging. Even the nobility, when on their journeys, usually dined at one religious house and supped at another.

When Ralph, Abbot of Canterbury, was installed in 1309, six thousand persons were entertained, and the dishes served up amounted to three thousand. Richard Winchelsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, provided daily victuals for five thousand poor people, and immense crowds of sick and infirm who were unable to attend his gate were supplied with necessaries at their own houses.

A list of the provisions for the feast of an Archbishop's enthronement in 1295 will convey an idea of the variety of medieval diet when flesh was excluded. It comprised 300 ling, 600 cod, 7 barrels of salt salmon at 28s. a barrel, 40 fresh salmon at 7s. each, 14 barrels of white herrings, 20 cades (*i.e.*, "long hundreds" of six score each) of red herrings, 5 barrels of salt sturgeon, 2 of salt eels, 600 fresh eels, 8,000 whelks, 100 pike, 400 tench, 100 carp, 800 bream, 2 barrels of salt lamprey, 80 large fresh lampreys (from the Severn), 1,400 small lampreys, 124 salt conger-eels, 200 large roach, besides seals and porpoise. There were olive-oil, honey, mustard, vinegar, verjuice (an essential ingredient of medieval sauces), £33 worth of spices and comfits, bread, wafers, with wines and beer in proportion. The London cooks' wages who were hired for the occasion came to £23; the rewards given to heralds, trumpeters, and mimes amounted to £20; painting the throne and making "subtelities," huge erections of plaster and wax, of which the edible portion was extremely small, if not non-existent, cost £16. To calculate the actual cost in present-day values, these sums must be multiplied by twenty. And such extravagances were not confined to the spiritual peers; the temporal lords were equally wasteful and ostentatious in their hospitalities.

By the time of Edward II. so excessive was the demand made upon the households of the great, that the barons were compelled, owing to a series of bad harvests, to restrict some of the extravagances which had so long prevailed. An ordinance was issued in the interests of the suffering poor, which denied to outside servants and hangers-on at baronial establishments the free quarters they had so long enjoyed. No one was to claim victuals under colour of minstrelsy or errand-running (*messengerie*). In the



Photo.]

THE KITCHEN.

By David Teniers the Younger.
(In the Royal Gallery at the Hague.)

[Hansjaeng].

hostels of prelates, earls, and barons not more than three or four honourable and genuine minstrels were to be all owed free board. The ordinance also cut down the number of courses upon men's tables ; two courses of flesh of four sorts each were to suffice ; prelates, earls, barons, and magnates might have an "entremet of one manner of charge" at their table.

The places in which the meals of such large numbers had to be prepared day by day were of necessity spacious apartments.

Most readers are probably acquainted with the appearance of the abbot's kitchen at Glastonbury, which, with its louvre roof, is often noticed as an architectural treasure.

At Lumley Castle, Durham, may be seen another remarkable old kitchen ; it is the loftiest and most stupendous in the kingdom, where, on occasion, a dinner for a regiment of soldiers might be cooked, and which, no doubt, has witnessed in the past many an immense roast at its enormous fireplaces.

Raby Castle has a fourteenth-century kitchen, thirty feet square, with three large fireplaces in it, the smoke escaping from a louvre in the centre of the roof.

Here we may glance for a moment at the amount of food which, in those feudal fighting days, was deemed necessary to victual a place like Dover Castle, for the maintenance of a thousand men for forty days. The regulation supplies comprised 180 quarters of wheat, to provide a loaf a day per man ; 600 gallons of wine, and 260 quarters of malt, wherewith to brew 520 gallons daily ; of meat (for 18 days out of the 40), 104 score carcasses, 270 of bacon and 8 score and 2 of mutton. For the 22 fish days there were required 18,000 herrings, 1,320 cod, and 600 stockfish. In addition there were

“ weighs ” of cheese and an allowance of pottage. Even with the careful provision of mustard, salt, spices, vinegar, eisell (common vinegar), and verjuice, the garrison could not have enjoyed a very varied diet.

The food of the agricultural labourer in the Edwardian period consisted principally of fish, chiefly herrings, of beer, and of bread made of barley, rye, peas, or sometimes of beans ; occasionally, as at “ harvest home,” he got messes of pottage and cheese. Rye-bread was “ black bread.”

The craftsman in the town was able to get better fare. From the earliest date the City of London was famous for its good cheer. Fitz-Stephen records that in the time of Henry II., “ besides the wine sold in the shops and vaults, there is a public cookery, or cooks’ row, where, according to the season, you may buy victuals of all kinds, roasted, baked, fried, and boiled ; fish, large and small, with coarse viands for the poorer sort, and more delicate ones for the rich, such as venison, fowls, and small birds.”

While the mansions of the nobles and the halls of the gentry abounded with the luxuries of the period, in the seventeenth year of Edward III.’s reign it was ordained that no “ common man ” should have upon his table dainty dishes or costly drinks.

It is easy to see, with a little reflection, why famines were frequent in olden times. Farmers sold their crops as soon as they had gathered them, and as the trade of a corn-factor was unknown, and corn was only stored in castles, abbeys, and granges, purchasers looked only to their immediate wants, and, having bought the corn cheap, were improvident in their consumption of it ; and so if the next harvest was a bad one, the commodity became scarce, and there was a famine. Piers Plowman tells us that after an abundant harvest no beggar would eat bread

that had beans in it, but would have "cohet and clermatyne" (particular kinds of fine bread) or else bread of "clean wheat," and "no halfpenny ale in no wise."

Till the middle of the sixteenth century dearth, if not famine, was frequently rampant in the land. Food was often dear from economical causes—as the arbitrary fixing of prices and the consequent withholding of foodstuffs from the markets, till barns had to be searched for corn by order of the justices. Grain, milk, butter, cheese, pigs, and poultry would rise to prohibitive prices through the ignorance of the law-makers trying to override the imperative law of supply and demand. In one insurrection against high prices and low wages thousands of wretched workmen were slaughtered.

VIII

· RIGHT ROYAL FEASTING

A marriage feast—King John's Christmas feast—The royal precept for spicery—For wine—Fish and other provisions—"Purveyance"—A precept on the royal farms and forests—The enormous quantities required not monkish exaggerations—But the scale of magnitude.

A MARKED feature of medieval life was the frequent display of profusion and luxuriance at the tables of the great.

One of the most extravagant galas of this kind was given by Richard, brother of Henry III., on his marriage with Cincia, daughter of Raymond, Count of Provence. The crowds of guests, the richness of their dresses, the number of minstrels and other entertainers engaged, were truly astonishing. The number of dishes served up amounted to thirty thousand.

The barons took their cue from the monarch, and as an example of "right royal feasting" nothing could exceed the profusion of King John's Christmas feast in the year of grace 1213. And this was at a time when the Pope's interdict still hung over the land; when although, by the resignation of his crown to the Papal See, John had reconciled himself to Innocent, he had yet cause to tremble at the power and determination of the confederated nobles, who in the autumn had sworn never to desist from demanding the "good old laws of the kingdom." All

this trouble evidently failed to interfere with the royal appetite, or to lessen the King's capacity for festivity. Although John had just complained that the royal exchequer was empty, with characteristic recklessness he made all preparations for the holding of a mighty Christmas feast.

From the Close Rolls we learn that Reginald de Cornhill was commanded to

"cause Galfrid the salter to receive for us 40 lb. of pepper, 6 lb. of cloves, half lb. of *gario fili*" (what this was we cannot discover; that it was very valuable appears from the circumstance that 20s. per lb. was paid for it, and that in no entry does it ever appear to have been obtained in a larger quantity than half a pound), "half lb. of nutmegs, 3 lb. of cinnamon, 3 lb. of ginger, to be used for us, and that it be placed to our account."

Another precept, dated December 12th, is addressed to the Keepers of the Royal Wines at Southampton for three hogsheads of wine.

By a further precept, dated Guildford, December 17th, Reginald de Cornhill is commanded to send immediately to Windsor

"twenty hogsheads of wine, costly, good, and new, both Gascony wines and French wine, and four hogsheads of best wine for our own drinking (*ad os nostrum*) both two of white wine and two of red wine, and that it be sent without delay, that it may be received before the day of the Nativity. And we require, for our use, against that day, 200 head of pork, and 1,000 hens, and 500 lb. of wax, and 50 lb. of pepper, and 2 lb. of saffron, and 100 lb. of almonds, good and new, and two dozen napkins, and 100 ells of linen cloth, to make table cloths, and 50 ells of delicate cloth of Rancian, and of spiceries to make *salsas* [probably this word rather signifies pickles] as much as ye shall judge necessary, and that all these be sent thither by Saturday or Sunday nearest Christmas. And ye shall send thither 15,000 herrings and other fish, and other victual, as Ph. de Langeburgh shall tell you. And all these ye shall buy at the accustomed market, as you may deserve our thanks, and according to custom you shall give in your accounts at the Exchequer. Concerning pheasants (*fasianis*), or partridges, and other birds, which you shall seek for our use, you shall have them from the manor."

As in those days the rapacity and insolence of the royal purveyors, who never paid above half-price, and in many instances not at all, was a crying grievance in the land, it is worthy of note that Reginald is commanded to *buy* the various commodities, and to purchase them at the proper time and place—*i.e.*, at fair prices.

The next precept is addressed to the Sheriff of Bucks, and was, therefore, most probably sent by the hands of the purveyor as a voucher for the articles thus purchased ; it directs that 500 hens and 20 swine be bought in the accustomed market, and also that pheasants, partridges, and other birds be sent from the manor (probably the honour of Wallingford). Then follows a precept to Matthew Mantell, to purchase 200 head of pork and 1,000 hens, then another "to John, the son of Hugh," apparently a keeper in one of the forests, to send to Windsor, brushwood, charcoal, torches, and *cyphes*, a sufficiency ; also 500 hens, with pheasants and other birds ; and lastly, a precept addressed to the Sheriff of Canterbury to send 10,000 salt eels !

The charge is often brought against the old monkish historians that they are always given to exaggeration, and that their descriptions of great feasts are particularly open to this charge. Much argument has been expended to prove that provisions could not be obtained in the quantities which these chroniclers mention. One controversialist, shocked at the wholesale falsehoods of Matthew Paris, who records that on one occasion a repast consisting of thirty thousand dishes was served up in Westminster Hall, gravely informs us that unless the ancient hall had been much larger than the present, it could not, setting the guests and their attendants out of the question, even have contained the dishes—forgetful that dinners usually consist of three or four courses,

and ignorant that among the luxurious Normans their feasts consisted of so many courses that the guests were detained for hours at the table while a constant succession of delicacies was placed before them.

Also it is worth remembering that our ancestors had certain dining customs which made for an economy in the service of plates ; there was the chivalrous act of courtesy between two friends, even between knights and ladies, of eating from one plate ; and the ancient form of trencher, such as may still be seen at Winchester School, was hollow on both sides, one to be used for meat, and the other for pudding.

Now in the foregoing precepts, which are preserved in the national records, we find that no less than 3,000 fowls, with a proportionate number of pheasants and partridges, 420 head of pork (with sheep and oxen, we must suppose, in proportion), and many thousands of eels and herrings, with 27 hogs-heads of wine to wash down all these solids, were all required for one feast. Truly we may be allowed to believe that thousands of dishes were employed to serve up this immense mass of provisions.

The evidence of the Close Rolls is not to be disputed. A precept, as seen above, sometimes orders the table linen as well. Another royal requisition for the accompanying beverages distinguishes between French wines and Gascony wines—a trade distinction, not a geographical lapse. Then : “ The King to the Sheriff of Kent. We direct that you buy for our use 1,000 hens, 500 lambs and kids, and 1,000 pitchers, of which each shall contain one gallon, and 40 oxen.” “ To the Sheriff of Surrey. We direct that ye shall cause to be obtained for us, 1,000 hens.” The Sheriff of Middlesex is directed also to send 1,000 hens and the Sheriff of Essex 2,000 !

Here, then, are preparations for a feast—a mighty one! 40 oxen, 500 lambs, 200 deer, 5,000 fowls, and 2,000 ells of linen for table-cloths! Who, after reading these precepts, will impugn the testimony of the much-abused monk of St. Albans? Who will now accuse the old romance writers of mere *romancing* when they tell of the marvellous feasting at Arthur's coronation?

From numerous other entries, although none of them are so full and so specific as those we have selected, we find that the royal feasts were not infrequently on an almost equal scale of magnitude; we find, further, that in regard to some articles the same quantity was always ordered. Towards the close of almost every year an order was given for 100 lb. of almonds, 50 lb. of pepper, and 2 lb. of saffron; these were therefore the accustomed quantities to be used in the royal kitchen. In a precept towards the commencement of the Roll, directing Reginald de Cornhill to deliver his accounts at the Exchequer, we find the prices affixed to the various articles. Ginger was 2s. 6d. per pound, cinnamon the same, nutmegs 10s., and mace, of which this is the only entry, also 10s.; the price of almonds varies from 25s. to 30s. the 100 lb., and saffron, the produce of our own fields, is, most singularly, charged as high as cinnamon.

IX

BARONIAL PROFUSION

Baronial hospitality—Its decline unpopular—A baronial hall—Its arrangement—The table ceremonial—The minstrels—Penshurst banqueting-hall—The “Forme of Cury” (1390)—Fifteenth-century cookery—“Mortrewes”—“Subtleties”—Some gorgeous examples—Royal dishes—Roasted peacock—Royal swan—“Cotagres”—The guests—Migratory households—Their commissariat arrangements—An episcopal example—Franklin profusion—And epicureanism—The “Glutton Mass”—Municipal profusion—Mealtimes—Luncheon or “Noon-tion”—Prolonged dinners.

COMING to the fourteenth century, we find still abroad among the barons and the gentry that spirit of munificent hospitality which meliorated the abject condition of the poor. An almost unlimited hospitality reigned in the palaces of the monarch and in the castles of the nobles ; and the Courts of the Kings of England in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries were splendid to a degree of which modern days exhibit but a feeble resemblance. The household accounts of Richard II. show that every day ten thousand persons sat down to meat at his charges, the royal kitchens serving out the messes to them by the hands of three hundred servitors.

The old rhyming chronicler, Harding, says :—

“Truly I heard Robert Ireleff say,
Clerk of the Green Cloth, that to the household
Came every day, for the most part alway
Ten thousand folk, by his messes told,
That followed the house, aye, as they would :
And in the kitchen three hundred servitours,
And in every office many occupiers.

The barons in general spent an excessive proportion of their large revenues and all the produce of their vast domains in the exercise of a lavish hospitality, the tables in their castle being ever open to strangers as freely as to their vassals and followers. It was at the close of the fourteenth century this open-handed hospitality began to decline. In the fifteenth century some of the barons, instead of dining in the great hall, sitting among their retainers according to ancient custom, adopted the practice of dining in private parlours with their families and intimate friends, an innovation which was extremely unpopular, and subjected the lord who followed the practice to much reproach.

The halls of baronial mansions and large manor-houses were all arranged for the convenience of taking meals. At the lower end of the hall was a passage, hidden by a screen, leading into the kitchen, from which smoking dishes were easily carried from broach or cauldron to the tables—on grand occasions, always in procession. An open drain ran through kitchen and scullery till the time of Henry III., when these cloacal conduits were first covered up and carried underground. The upper end of the hall was lighted by a large bay window; here was the dais on which stood the lord's table, and close by an open cupboard which contained the family plate. Below the dais was the large table, extending nearly the length of the hall.

The table ceremonial of a great noble (like Warwick the Kingmaker, for instance) was as picturesque as it was rigid in its observance.

At the dinner hour—10 a.m.—the Earl appeared in his place, with his splendid retinue of secretary, councillors, marshal, steward, and master of the horse, his chaplain and choristers who officiated in his chapel and chanted the grace at his table, his

constables, heralds, guards, pursuivants, pages, and trumpeters, and his jester.

When all the guests and retainers were assembled, the master steward knocked loudly on the oaken board, the blessing was chanted, and every one seated himself according to his rank, the noble and gentle on the dais, and also at the central table till they came to the huge silver salt-cellar, the line of demarcation below which the common people sat. Any caitiff who presumed to sit out of his order, stood a chance of being pelted by the company with the bones they had picked.

Then came in the train of servants bearing the pewter dishes loaded with beef and mutton, fresh and salted, fowls and fish, pasties and loaves, wastel and simnel bread, the strange and numerous compounds which formed the dessert, and the flagons of wine, ale, and beer which were freely served to the company by troops of waiters—to the higher guests in silver cups, to the lower tables in cups of pewter, horn, or wood.

Beeves, sheep, pigs, geese, fowls, venison, and game were washed down with copious draughts of English ale or foreign wine. The extent of a baronial larder may be gauged by the stores recorded as stolen from one of the baronies of the elder Despenser in the reign of Edward II.—80 carcasses of beef, 600 carcasses of mutton, and 601 fitches of bacon.

For three hours or more the company sat at this meal, now and then bursting into uproarious laughter at the jokes of the jester, or at the pranks of tumblers, jugglers and buffoons. Digestion was also aided by the minstrels who discoursed sweet music in the gallery.

The English minstrel may be considered the lineal descendant of the ancient Scandinavian skald, or else,

maybe, of the British bard. He was at one time, certainly, held in high esteem according as his talent was able to stimulate his hearers to hardy deeds and great enterprises, or for his art in recounting for delivery to posterity the achievements of his noble patrons. Minstrels were allowed considerable freedom of speech, so great was the regard in which they were held—the relationship between Richard Cœur de Lion and Blondel will illustrate this. The Normans called them “joculators”; to the English they were known as “gleemen.”

A noble specimen of an old banqueting-hall in a baronial mansion of the time of Edward III. is still to be seen at Penshurst, in Kent, the seat of the Sidneys.

The hall and its immense, strongly-jointed table exhibit a rudeness which belongs to a martial age when both gentle and simple revelled together, parted only by the salt.

The floor is now of brick. The raised platform, or dais, at the west end, advances sixteen feet into the room. The width of the hall is about forty feet, and the length of it is fifty-four feet. On each side are tall Gothic windows, much of the tracery of which has been some time knocked out and the openings plastered up. At the east end is a fine large window, with two smaller ones above it; but the large window is, for the most part, hidden by the front of the music-gallery. In the centre of the floor an octagon space is marked out with a rim of stone, and within this space stands a massy old dog, or brand-iron, about a yard and a half wide, and the two upright ends three feet six inches high, having on their outer sides near the top the double broad arrow of the Sidney arms. The smoke from the fire which was laid on this jolly dog ascended and passed through the centre of the roof, which is high and of

framed oak, and was adorned at the spring of the huge groined spars with grotesque projecting carved figures, or corbels, which are now taken down, having been considered in danger of falling, and are laid in the music-gallery.

The heavy oak tables, which are of a somewhat later period, remain. That on the dais, the lord's table, is six yards long and about one wide; and at this simple board (says William Howitt) no doubt Sir Philip and Algernon Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, Saccharissa, Waller, Ben Jonson, and, though last mentioned, many a noble, and some crowned heads have often sat to dine. At one time the gentle and pious Edward VI., at another his more domineering and shrewd sister, Elizabeth, with her proud favourite, Leicester or Essex, Cecil or Warwick, all allied to, or in habits of intimacy with, the lord of the house. James I., and Charles, then prince, no doubt took their seats here; and the paintings in the gallery and rooms above will show us many a high-born beauty and celebrated noble and gentleman who have graced this old hall with their presence, and made its rafters echo to their wit and merriment.

The tables down the centre of the hall, at which the yeomen retainers and servants sat, are seven yards long, and of a construction several degrees less in remove from the common trestle.

At the lower end of the hall is a tall wainscot screen supporting the music gallery, the plainness and even rudeness of its fashion marking the earliness of its date. The space betwixt it and the end of the hall forms a passage from one court to the other, and serves also to conceal the entrances to the kitchen, larder, and other similar offices.

On each side of the dais, as in our old colleges, ascends a flight of one hundred stairs, one leading

to the old apartments of the house, the other into a sort of little gallery, out of which the lord could look into the hall and call his wassailers to order if any unusual clamour or riot was going on, or call to any of his menials, bells not then being in use.

On the right hand of the dais is the entrance into the cellar—an odd situation to our present fancy, but then, no doubt, thought very convenient for the butler to bring up the wine to the lord's table. Such was the arrangement of a baronial banqueting-hall in the olden time.

To provide for the thousands of guests who fed daily at the table of Richard II., besides a good supply of fish, game, and poultry, it was necessary to slaughter daily twenty-eight oxen and three hundred sheep.

Well might the head cook of this immense establishment style his master "the best and royalist viander of all Christian kynges" in the vellum roll entitled "The Forme of Cury" compiled by him, and containing the authorised culinary recipes for the royal kitchen. This curious old manuscript, written in 1390, which gives a fairly complete insight into the cookery of the period, will be referred to in a subsequent chapter.

Chaucer was an honoured courtier at the time these royal entertainments were at their highest pitch of extravagance. The poet's ideal householder had a table standing "redy covered alle the longe day." He makes his Canterbury Pilgrims take thought for their welfare on the journey:—

"A Coke they hadden with hem for the nones [nonce],
 To boile the chikenes and the marie bones,
 And poudre marchand, tart and galingale [sweet cypres].
 Wel coude he knowe a draught of London ale.
 He coude roste, and sethe, and broile, and frie,
 Maken mortrewes, and wel bake a pie.
 For blanc manger that made he with the best."

Two fifteenth-century cookery-books have been published by the English Text Society, from a study of which it is clear that the scientific preparation and dressing of food at that period were largely dominated by French influences.

The French titles of the various dishes as they appear in English garb are at times not a little puzzling. For instance, at first sight one does not recognise *lait* under *let*, *froide* as *fryit*, or *sauce* in *sauke*. *Herbelettes* (small herbs) is almost unrecognisable as *arbolettys*.

Our forefathers, possibly from having stronger stomachs, fortified by outdoor life, evidently liked their dishes strongly seasoned and piquant, as many of the recipes show. Pepper, ginger, cloves, garlic, cinnamon, galingale ("the aromatical root of the rush called cypresse"), vinegar, verjuice (the juice of crabs and sour apples), and wine—these appear constantly in dishes where we should little expect them; and even ale is frequently used in the cookery of the period. Ale, for instance, was commonly mingled in the water in which fish was boiled. Milk and almond milk are common ingredients; vinegar is used in brawn, and verjuice in meat custard.

According to the more famous authority just mentioned, "The Forme of Cury," the following was the recipe for a "mortrewes," a very favourite dish at that period, which was eaten with a spoon.

"Take hens and pork and boil them together. Take the flesh of the hens and of the pork, and hew it small, and grind it all to dust. Take grated bread, and put thereto, and temper it with the broth, and mix it with the yolks of eggs, and cast thereon strong powder [a mixture of hot spices], boil it, and put therein powder of ginger, sugar, saffron, and salt; then look that it be stiff, and flour it with ginger powder."

The mortrewes, or mortress, was so called because the chief ingredients were pounded together in a

mortar. A helpful glossary to "The Forme of Cury" was compiled by Dr. Pegge.

In the ancient accounts of great English entertainments mention is invariably made of "sotelties." These were devices in sugar and pastry, which not only added magnificence to the table, but often displayed the witty invention of the cook. Thus when the conquering Henry V. brought home his French bride, Catherine, the soteltie at the first course of her coronation banquet represented a pelican sitting on its nest, and an image of St. Catherine, bearing a scroll on which appeared: "It is the King's wish that all his people shall be merry, and in this manner he publishes his intentions."

At the second course the soteltie represented a panther with St. Catherine on her Wheel, and bore the motto, "The Queen, my child, shall meet with deserved renown on this island." The soteltie in the third course represented St. Catherine and angels, with the motto, "It is written, as is heard and seen, that by a sacred marriage war shall be terminated."

All the courses at great feastings were accompanied and adorned by these sotelties (otherwise "subtleties"), figures in jellies, sweets, or confectioneries of some sort; artistic mouldings of human or animal groups, or of buildings and scenery, often representing some legend or historical event, and each having a label attached to it containing some wise or witty saying appropriate to the design.

A gorgeous effort was made at a dinner given in 1454 by Philip the Good, father of Charles the Bold of Burgundy.

The tables, three in number, were covered with ponderous decorations that must have taxed the ingenuity, not only of cooks and confectioners, but of artificers in every department of mechanics. Here

a fortress, surrounded by walls and ditches, was attacked by a besieging army ; there a lake was to be seen, with castles and hamlets on its borders, and boats sailing on its surface. On one table was a church with its lofty steeple and stained windows, and within it an organ and a choir of singers ; on another a mammoth pastry in which a band of twenty-eight musicians were concealed. There were besides a forest filled with wild animals of every description, a prairie enamelled with flowers, and surrounded by huge rocks of sapphires and rubies, and a mountain with its summit covered with ice. Each course was composed of forty-four dishes, which were placed on chariots painted in gold and azure, and were moved along the tables by concealed machinery. In the intervals of the repast a variety of uncouth monsters were introduced.

It will be observed from this and other recipes dating back to the Plantagenet period that cooks in those days were almost as anxious to please the eye as the palate. Many of their best dishes were adorned with gold and silver foil, or "flowered," as they termed it, with various coloured powders. Among other methods of adornment, those generally used for the peacock and the swan are best known, as they invariably appeared at every royal feast.

The peacock was skinned, stuffed with spices, and roasted. While the cooking was going on a cloth continually wetted was kept round the bird's head to save it from the action of the fire. When cooked it was allowed to cool, and then the skin was neatly sewn on again, the tail feathers spread out, the comb gilt, and a piece of cloth dipped in spirits of wine placed in its mouth, to be set on fire while it was being served up at table, which was accompanied by some ceremonial. The serving was performed by the ladies most distinguished for rank and beauty,

following the dish in procession to the music of minstrels, who placed it in front of the guest most famed for courtesy, or, if it were after a tournament, the victorious knight, who took a chivalrous oath of valour or enterprise on its head.

After the expenditure of all this art upon the peacock, its flesh was tough and tasteless.

The royal swan was skewered in a sitting posture for roasting. The recipe ran :—

“ Make a stiff bed of paste about the thickness of your thumb, colour it green, comb it out, and it will look like a meadow full of grass. Take your swan and gild him over with gold ; then add a kind of loose flying cloak of vermilion colour within, and painted with arms without, then set the swan upon his bed, cover some part of him with the cloak, stick about small banners upon little sticks, the banners painted with the arms most agreeable to the persons seated at table.”

Vows of chivalry were also made upon this bird when served in this regal style.

At a grand feast, when Edward I. knighted his eldest son on the eve of his Scottish expedition, two swans, gorgeously caparisoned, were introduced with a flourish of trumpets, upon which the King swore, in the presence of God and the ladies, that he would avenge the murder of John Comyn, and punish the perfidy of Robert Bruce.

It may not be generally known that up till a century or so ago swans were prepared for the table in and around Norwich ; the young birds were put up to fatten in August, given as much barley as they would eat, and by November they were in prime condition. If kept longer they began to fall off, losing flesh and fat, and the meat becoming darker in colour. A present of a Norwich cygnet was always very carefully accompanied by the following printed formula :—

“Take three pounds of beef, beat fine in a mortar,
Put it into the swan—that is, when you’ve got her.
Some pepper, salt, mace; some nutmeg, an onion,
Will heighten the flavour in gourmands’ opinion.
Then tie it up tight, with a small piece of tape,
That the gravy and other things may not escape.
A meal paste, rather stiff, should be laid on the breast,
And some whited brown paper should cover the rest.
Fifteen minutes at least, ere the swan you take down,
Pull the paste off the bird, that the breast may get brown.

THE GRAVY.

To a gravy of beef good and strong I opine
You’ll be right if you add half a pint of port wine;
Pour this through the swan, yes, right through the belly,
Then serve the whole up with some hot currant jelly.”

The Corporation of Norwich still maintain their ancient swannery at St. Helen’s Swan Pit, and sell off a few of the fatted birds every Christmas, at two guineas each.

Another medieval dish considered to rank amongst the daintiest of delicacies was called “cotagres,” a name which was possibly derived from a corruption of the word “cock,” and “grees” a wild pig. The recipe for making it ran in this wise:—

“Take a pig’s liver and hew it small. Mix it with strong powder, saffron, salt, currants, and sugar. Then take a whole roasted cock, pull it to pieces, and cast him all together save the legs. Take a pig and skin him from the middle downwards, fill him full of the stuffing, and sew him up again. Put him into a pan and boil him well, and when well boiled put him on a spit and roast him well. Colour with yolks of eggs and saffron, and lay thereon foils of gold and silver, and serve forth.”

The capacious hall during one of these sumptuous entertainments was thronged with knights and dames in rich and gorgeous array. The extended table laboured under the weight of vast dishes, whose contents were garnished with flowers and adorned

with gold. The etiquette observed was characterised by a grandeur and a pompous ceremonial ; a spirit of parade and romantic gallantry presided over the feasts of this age, which, though it may appear ridiculous to modern ideas, was no doubt well calculated to produce good effects in nurturing a martial disposition among the nobility, but more so in preserving a sense of decorum and politeness in the presence of ladies, and so forming a check on the licentious manners of an unlettered age. Much of the ceremonial was directly devised towards a display of gallantry and to the formation of a correct demeanour towards the fair sex, while the splendour of these feasts was directed towards increasing a refinement of manners. The entire system was conceived in a high-flown spirit of romanticism ; thus, in the language of those days, "the peacock was the food of lovers and the meat of lords." The minstrel tuned his harp to feats of chivalry, or recited deeds of prowess in praise of some hero of romance, the noble company getting a thrill when, at certain periods of the festivities, warlike peals burst forth from the horns and other military instruments of the age—as when the trumpets heralded a procession, or "brayed out the triumph of a pledge."

A great English noble had, besides his castle, several baronial halls, and manor-houses on his various estates, and often a house in London as well. Between these places he was constantly moving, and at every migration he carried in his impedimenta the chief of his domestic utensils, his brass pots, cooking utensils, and perhaps crockery. At each house the farm and the orchard provided his provisions ; it always contained cellars and spiceries well stored. He kept his own baker and breweress, and even made his own candles from the fat of the mutton and deer.

On the great occasions upon which he sat in baronial state to receive the homage of his tenants, give audience to their petitions and complaints, and transact other seignorial business, the day was concluded by a great feast in the hall, at which the resources of the estate were seen in the profusion which graced the boards. The manor-house often enough was called "the hall" from the great apartment in which this took place.

Besides the hall, one private chamber was allotted to the lord of the house. The cook had his kitchen, adjacent to the hall; there was the sewery for the sewer, or officer who served and removed the dishes, and tasted them to prove their fitness; and there was the butlery.

We get a glimpse of the domestic arrangements in such an establishment from the Household Roll of Richard de Swinfield, Bishop of Hereford (1290), who was constantly moving about from manor-house to manor-house. The baker always preceded the family; his office was an important one, and baking-day was always Saturday.

When the provender had been gathered from the different farms, the episcopal kitchen reeked with food, and all the necessaries of life produced on the estate. Due care was taken that the cellars were kept full of wine and the spiceries with foreign luxuries. The kitchen and ovens were put into working order, wood and charcoal were brought in from the forest, and also loads of thorns to crackle under the pots.

Being a bishop's household, we find evidence in the Roll that all the days of abstinence were observed. Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday were days of abstinence. On these and the seasonal fasts (as in Lent and on certain vigils) vast quantities of fish were consumed; we read of "sticks of eels," twenty-

five on a stick ; of salmon, lampreys, and lamperns from the Severn, and of trout in plenty during the season of the May-fly ; of fresh mackerel in June, and of gallons of oysters in the winter ; of dried cod brought from Aberdeen, and salted herrings kept in store.

Gruel we find served in abundance, and soup is mentioned. Allusion is made to the activity of the salting-tubs at Martinmas—salt was widely distributed from Droitwich in Worcestershire, or from one of the Cheshire “wiches,” all over the kingdom, except to certain places round the coast, where salt was obtained by the evaporation of sea-water—for the pickling or curing of beeves, swine, sheep, and deer ; and we may even be permitted to infer the use of salted greens, from the scant supply of fresh vegetables recorded. The office of house steward was no sinecure in a baronial establishment of the olden times.

Of the rank below, the franklin or country gentleman, Chaucer picturesquely described the hospitality as so abundant that “it snewed in his hous of mete and drinke.” In his hall stood his table, “redy covered alle the longe day” ; and instead of retiring to “the privy parlour,” like the baron, to evade the duties of the festive hall, he was the Saint Julian “in his countree,” the patron and host of all travellers. Abundance rather than quality was the distinguishing feature of his household provisions ; ale and wine, bread and baked meats, birds and game, and stewed fish, varied according to the season of the year ; but the franklin boasted no foreign dishes or cookery such as the nobles took pride in ; and instead of earthenware dishes and plates, the luxuries of the baronial halls, his family and honoured guests were accommodated with wooden trenchers and leathern jacks. He was the

prototype of the "fine old English gentleman" whose patriotic fervour could conceive of no finer dish than "the roast beef of old England."

Yet the English kitchen was not beyond French influence, for we note that Justice Shallow, not content with the ordinary plain English dishes, asks his cook for "pretty little tiny kickshaws," which was undoubtedly a French concoction, "kickshaw" being a corruption of *quelque chose*.

Chaucer describes the franklin or country gentleman of his day as "Epicurus's own son."

"Withouten bake mete never was his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of allè daintees that men coud of thinke.
Woe was his cook but if his sauce were
Poinant and sharpe; and redy all his gear."

Shakespeare, too, took a most wholesome interest in food, and there are some curious old-time menus to be gathered from his plays. Shallow's orders for his cook before entertaining Falstaff were:—

"Some pigeons, Davy, a couple of short-legged hens, a joint of mutton, and any pretty little tiny kickshaws, tell William cook."

While Mistress Page prepared for the Fat Knight

"Hot venison pasty, plenty of wine, and pippins and cheese to come."

The upper classes of medieval England were addicted to a gluttonous mode of living; a fault not confined to the rich, for though the common people had but two or three meals a day, they fared abundantly if coarsely. This is illustrated by the custom of the "glutton Mass," which was celebrated five times a year in honour of the Virgin Mary. Early in the morning the parishioners assembled in the church, laden with stores and pro-

visions ; Mass was then said, after which the priests and the people began to feast, so that the church became a scene of rioting and intemperance, and neighbouring parishes often contended which should hold the greatest feast.

With the rise of the municipalities, the same profusion characterised civic entertainments. A Venetian travelling in England about the year 1500 records that he saw the Mayor's banquet at the Guildhall, where a thousand people were seated at table, and the meal lasted upwards of four hours. At the sheriff's dinner he also observed "the same profusion of victuals," and adds, "I noticed how punctiliously they sat in their order, and the extraordinary silence of every one." The stolid Englishman, intent on his meal, is no doubt sparing of his conversation. And the feasts of the metropolitan city in the days of Henry VII. were as magnificent as they generally were stupid.

Gentlefolk breakfasted at seven off bread and beef, ale and wine. Dinner followed at ten and sometimes lasted till one. Supper generally came at four, and was as substantial as the breakfast ; then between eight and nine the "livery" or evening collation, consisting of bread, ale, and spiced wine was had, generally in bed. Mealtimes were altering in the fourteenth century. Here is an extract from the Journal of Elizabeth Woodville, who became the queen of Edward IV :—

" 10 May 1451.

Six o'clock (a.m.) Breakfasted. The buttock of beef rather too much boiled, and the ale a little the stalest. Memorandum : to tell the cook about the first fault, and to mend the second myself by tapping a fresh barrel directly.

Ten o'clock (a.m.) Went to dinner. . . .

Seven o'clock (p.m.) Supper at the table. . . . The goose pie too much baked, and the loin of pork almost roasted to rags."

The word "luncheon," which signifies a short meal between breakfast and dinner, has been confused with "nunchion," or literally "nooncion," derived from "noon," the middle of the day. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1830 quotes an account for some London repairs made in the years 1422 and 1423, in which the workmen had certain allowances made to them for their "nunchyns," "noonchyns," or "nonsenches"—the term is variously spelt, but it probably denotes a mid-day allowance of drink, such as the Normans called a "bever." The derivation of "lunch" is from "lump" or "hunch," signifying a handful of food, such as a labourer would indulge in.

Originally a "breakfast" was really a *break* in the long *fast* from overnight, a mere snack, a light meal like that still customary on the Continent, till the principal meal was served. Indeed, the French word "dinner," in its earliest use, meant to *un-fast*.

A medieval tale very quaintly illustrates the unconscionable time spent over their meals in those days by persons of rank and wealth; it runs in this wise:—

"An Italian having a sute here in Englande to the Archbushoppe of Yorke, and commynge to Yorke, when one of the prebendaries there breake his breade, as they term it, and thereupon make a solemne longe diner, the whiche perhaps began at eleven, and continued well nigh till fower in the afternoone, at the whiche the bishoppe was. It fortuned that as they were sette, the Italian knockt at the gate, unto whom the porter, perceiving his errand, answered that my lord bishoppe was at diner. The Italian departed, and returned betwixt twelve and one; the porter answered they were yet at diner. He came againe at twoo of the clocke; the porter told hym they had not half dined. He came at three a clocke unto whom the porter in a heate, answered never a worde, but churlishlie did shutte the gates upon him. Whereupon, others told the Italian that there was no speaking with my lorde almoste that daie, for the solemn diner sake. The gentilman Italian wonderyng much at suche a long sitting, and greatly greved because he could

not then speake with the archbyshoppe's grace, departed straight towards London ; and leavyng the dispatche of his matters with a dere friend of his, tooke his journey towards Italie. Three yeres after it happened that an Englishman came to Rome, with whom this Italian by chaunce fallying acquainted, asked him if he knewe the Archbishoppe of Yorke. The Englishman said he knewe him right well. 'I praye you tell me,' quoth the Italian, 'hath that Archbishoppe yet dined ?'

The generous living and profuse hospitality of the old nobility and gentry of this country may afford pleasant reading, till reflection shows how ill-judged it all was. With such a large proportion of the community dependent upon the precarious bounty of the great, the result could not have been other than demoralising.

X

TABLE MANNERS OF TUDOR TIMES

Fifteenth-century mealtimes—And fare—Regulations of a princely household—"Livery" and livery cupboards—Henry VIII.'s banquets—Always honoured by the ladies—The entertainments—The luxuries—The wines—The commoner beverages—Acid wines diluted—And doctored—Elizabethan banquets—Burdened by affectation of learning—Mythological pastry-cooks—Magiric magicians—Satirised by the dramatists—The royal table at Greenwich—Served with almost impious ceremonial—Elizabethan fare—And mealtimes—The evolution of the dining-table—The "table of degrees"—Credenza or sideboard—"Beefeaters."

By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the barbarous magnificence of the baronial establishment had given way to a more decorous system. The gross and boundless hospitality of former times, as it was dispensed to turbulent retainers, had passed with decaying feudalism.

In the fifteenth century it was the custom in great families to partake of four meals in the course of the day, viz., breakfast, dinner, supper, and *livery*; the last of which consisted of delicate cakes, mulled wine, and spiced liquors of various kinds, served up in their bedchamber previous to their going to rest, which was usually between the hours of eight and nine, which may appear strange to our fashionables of the present day; but when we consider

they breakfasted at seven, dined at ten, and supped at four, the greater portion was not spent in sleep ; and such were the good effects of *early rising*, that an earl and his fair countess had for breakfast “ two loaves of bread, a quart of beer, a quart of wine, two pieces of salt fish, six baconed herrings, four white herrings, or a dish of sprats.”

Barclay, in his *Ecloges*, gives a fifteenth-century bill of fare in verse :—

“What fishe is of savor swete and delicious,
 Rosted or sodden in swete herbes or wine,
 Or fried in oyle, most saporous and fine—
 The pasties of a hart—
 The crane, the fesaunt, the peacocke, and curlewe,
 The patriche, plover, bittorn, and heronshewe,
 Seasoned so well in licquor redolent
 That the hall is full of pleasant smell and sent.”

The table of the private gentleman, and of the merchant, though inferior in profusion to that of the nobleman, was by no means scantily provided ; a meal ranged from four to six dishes of very good fare.

Any luxury the yeoman enjoyed had to be supplied from his own farmyard. At Christmas he had pig and brawn “ and mustard withal,” goose and capon, cheese and apples, “ with good cheere and plaie.” His Lenten diet consisted mainly of red herrings and salt fish, which at Easter he gladly changed to veal and bacon.

Shopkeepers, mechanics, and labourers breakfasted at eight, dined at noon, and supped at six, which were later hours than those of the nobility. “ Supper ” derived its name from being in early times a mere *sop* of bread dipped in broth or gravy.

The households of the nobility were modelled on those of the King, and regulated with great precision

and regularity. Here are a few "rules of the house" of "the righte excellent princesse Cicill, late mother unto the right noble prince Kinge Edward IV."

"Upon eatynge dayes, at dynner by eleven of the clocke, a first dynner in the tyme of highe masse, for carvers, cupbearers, sewars, and offycers.

"Upon fastinge dayes, by twelve of the clocke, and a later dynner for carvers and for wayters.

"At supper upon eatynge dayes for carvers and offycers, at four of the clocke : my lady and the householde at five of the clocke, at supper.

"When my lady is served of the second course, at dynner, at supper, the chamber is rewarded and the halle with breede and ale, after the discretyon of the usher. [That is, those whose different stations in the family entitle them to sit either in the chamber or the hall are at this time regaled with bread and ale.] Rewardes from the kytchen there is none, savinge to ladyes and gentlewomen ; to the head offycers if they be present ; to the deane of the chappelle, to the almoner, to the gentlemen ushers, to the carvers, cupbearers, and sewars, to the cofferer, to the clerke of the kytchen, and to the marshall.

"There is none that dyneth in their offyces savinge only the cookes, the scullery, the sawcerye, the porters, the baker, if they be occupied with bakeinge.

"Upon Sondaye, Tuesdaye, and Thursdaye the household at dynner is served with beefe and mutton, and one roste ; at supper, leyched beefe [*i.e.*, in shives] and mutton roste.

"Upon Mondaye and Wensdaye at dynner, on boyled beefe and mutton at supper, *ut supra*.

"Upon fastinge dayes, salte fyshe, and two dishes of fresh fyshe ; if there come a principall feaste, it is served like unto the feaste honorablye.

"If Monday or Wensdaye be hollidaye, then is the household served with one roste, as in other dayes.

"Upon Satterdaye at dynner, salt fyshe, one fresh fyshe, and butter : at supper salt fishe and egges.

"Wyne daylie to the heade offycers when they be present, to the ladyes and gentlewomen, to the deane &c. [as before enumerated].

"Upon Frydaye is made paymente of all manner of freshe cates ; at every moneth ende is made paymente of all manner of other thinges. ['Cates,' or provisions opsonia, were the more delicate or more perishable foods, to be eaten with bread. A 'caterer' was a purveyor of such viands.]

"Proclamacyon is made foure times a yeaere about Berkamsted in market townes, to understande whether the purveyors, cators, and others, make true payments of my ladyes money, or not, &c. &c.

"Breakfastes there be none, savinge onely the head offycers &c [as before enumerated].

"All other officers that must be at the bereavement [a slight morning repast], have their breakfaste together in the compting house, after the bereavements be made.

"Lyvery of breade, ale, and fyre and candles is assigned . . . whole lyverie of all such thinges as is above specified, from the feaste of Allhallowe unto the feaste of the purification of our Ladye ; half lyverie of fire and candles unto Good Friday ; for then expireth the tyme of fyre and candle alsoe."

This is a faithful picture of the actual household economy of an English princess in the fifteenth century.

As the supper began as early as four or five in the evening, and there was no other set meal till breakfast next morning—no meal at which guests would be served from the contents of the larder—"livery cupboards" were used for holding small quantities of food in the bedrooms, to which guests (also the officers and upper servants of the household) could obtain access and help themselves.

By the term "livery" we are to understand an allowance of bread, beer, and candles (or tapers).

The "livery cupboard" had folding doors and a lock, the front partly panelled, partly fitted with balusters, so as to let the air play through it and keep the food fresh.

Court memoirs of the reign of Henry VIII. afford us a good insight into the fashionable pleasures of the time. This monarch's banquets were celebrated for their splendour and profusion, and the cost of some of them must have made considerable inroads on the royal purse. These royal entertainments began at six or seven in the evening, and among the many costly viands were the best that the royal

parks and forests could supply. To these Court convivialities it was always considered becoming and proper to admit the fair sex to a full participation—not merely to invite them to the tantalising position of spectators. The ladies of the gallant Henry's Court obtained a share in these, as in every other species of diversion ; at all feasts they were certainly regarded as essential members of the company. At the palace of Wolsey, Cavendish describes them as sitting alternately with the gallants of the Court ; and at the feast of the Serjeants, held at Ely House in the twenty-third year of Henry's reign, Queen Catharine presided at the head of one table and the King at another, in separate apartments.

“The party being assembled, and the King and Queen seated in their chairs of state, it was the custom to begin the ceremonial of royal banquets by presenting hippocras and wafers to the sovereign and his consort. The dishes were then placed, and were frequently replenished, according to the quality and number of those assembled at the board ; but the courses were always numerous, and included a considerable number and variety of viands.”

It was about this period, that the substantial character of these repasts began to give place to a greater degree of elegance in the choice of provisions. Except venison (sometimes eaten with furmenty), or pork stewed into broth, no butchers' meat was allowed to appear on table at the high-day festivals of the Court, or at the palaces of the nobles : but at city feasts, or at those purely ceremonial, the baron of beef, or even the spectacle of an entire carcass, was still permitted to gladden the eyes of the hungry.

At the dinner before specified, which was declared to be little inferior to the feast of a coronation, it was deemed necessary to provide twenty-four great “beefes,” one hundred fat “muttons,” ninety-one

pigs, one carcass of an ox, besides fourteen dozen of swan, and other varieties of the feathered and finny tribes, too numerous to be detailed. As the female members of a company are usually critics in the more delicate minutiae of the culinary art, our ancestors did not fail still to intersperse their banquets with intricate confectionery, in which their skill appears to have been by no means despicable.

The usual "subtleties," those skilful contrivances in confectionery of symbolical meanings and complimentary references, were still in vogue.

Between the courses, and after the feast, the attendants presented to the company services of fruit, butter, spiced cakes, hard cheese, and sweetmeats ; and in these intervals the introduction of music and songs filled up the pauses in conversation ; and pageants, mummings, and dancing were sometimes contrived to vary the monotonous pleasures of the table. As to the beverages—

"In enumerating the luxuries of the ancient banquet, it must not be supposed that wine, that requisite of convivial scenes, was wanting to complete its allurements. We have seen in what profusion the Rhenish wines were distributed to the multitudes who thronged to view the festivities of the Court, on various public occasions ; and it may easily be supposed how common the use of such an article must have been, to have authorised so liberal a distribution to the populace. The consumption of wine, although prodigious, appears, however, to have been regulated in the houses of our nobility and monarchs with scrupulous attention to economy, notwithstanding the low value of those most in general use. Henry VIII. bestowed considerable attention upon the article of wine, and by several statutes endeavoured to restrain the increased prices of 'Malmsey, romaneis, or rumney, sack, and other sweet wines.'

"The wines most in use at this period appear to have been Malmsey, Rhenish, and the wines of Gascony and of Guienne ; which last were introduced into England at the time when part of the French dominions surrendered to the British arms : besides these, it has been decided that the champagne vintage was already in great repute ; and among others who estimated its productions, Henry VIII. is numbered, and is even stated to have held one of

the vineyards of Ay in his own hands ; sack, that still unexplained object of antiquarian inquiry, was also one of the luxuries of this age.

“At coronations or banquets it was, however, invariably the custom to dilute the genuine wines, and to cover the harshness and acidity which they possessed by mixing them with honey or with spices. ‘Thus compounded,’ says a modern writer on the subject, ‘they passed under the generic name of piments, because they were originally prepared by the *pigmentarii* or apothecaries, and they were used much in the same manner as the *liqueurs* of modern times. The varieties of piment chiefly introduced at the banquets of our kings were hippocras, so called from the bag termed ‘Hippocrates’ sleeve,’ through which it was strained ; and clarry, or clarre, a claret, or mixed wine, mingled with honey, and frequently drunk as a composing draught by persons who were on the point of retiring to rest. These beverages, especially hippocras, were deemed too expensive to be distributed on ordinary occasions, nor do they appear from the accounts given by our chroniclers to have been presented more than once during the feast. Metheglin or mead, braket, a composition of ale and honey, a very ancient drink in this country, and ale, were chiefly used for private persons and domestics.”

The royal banquets of Elizabeth’s time differed widely from those of her predecessors, even from the honest and unrefined heartiness which had characterised those of her bluff and jovial sire. A pedantic affectation of learning pervaded the atmosphere ; and wild inventions of heathen mythology or classical fable even got interwoven in the pageantry of her feastings. When she paid a visit to the house of one of her nobles, at the entering of the hall she was saluted by the “Penates” and conducted to her privy chamber by “Mercury.” Even the pastry-cooks of the time became expert mythologists.

At dinner select transformations of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* were exhibited in confectionery. The icing of an immense “plomb-cake” would be embossed with a delicious basso-relievo of the Fall of Troy. There was no end to the fooleries of this description—most of them foreign to the subject here under consideration.

This kind of extravagance is satirised by the leading dramatists of the time, as thus Beaumont and Fletcher :—

“I’ll make you pigs speak French at table, and a fat swan
Come sailing out of England with a challenge ;
I’ll make you a dish of calves’ feet dance the canaries,
And a consort of cramm’d capons fiddle to ’em,
A calf’s head speak an oracle, and a dozen of larks
Rise from the dish and sing all supper-time.
’Tis nothing, boys. I’ve framed a fortification
Out of rye-paste which is impregnable,
And against that, for two long hours together,
Two dozen of marrow-bones shall play continually.
For fish, I’ll make you a standing lake of white-broth,
And pikes come plowing up the plums before them :
Arion on a dolphin, playing Lachrymæ ;
And brave king herring with his oil and onion
Crown’d with a lemon peel, his way prepared
With his strong guard of pilchers,
I’ll bring you in the lady-loin-o’-veal,
With the long love she bore the Prince of Orange :
A full vine bending like an arch, and under
The blown god Bacchus, sitting on a hog’shead,
His altar here ; before that, a plump vintner
Kneeling, and offering incense to his deity,
Which shall be only this, red sprats and pilchers.”

And then the marvels and magnificence of the magiric magicians :—

“What do we read there of Hiarbas’ banquet
(The great gymnosophist), that had his butlers
And carvers of pure gold waiting at table ?
The images of Mercury, too, that spoke ?
The wooden dove that flew ? A snake of brass
That hissed ? And birds of silver that did sing ?”

How easy to the proficient cook it all is, the dramatic dialogue proceeds to demonstrate. It was—

“As easy as a man would roast an egg,
If that be all. For, look you, gentlemen,
Here stand my broths ; my finger slips a little,

Down drops a dose ; I stir him with my ladle,
 And there's a dish for a duke, *olla podrida* ;
 Here stands a baked meat ; he wants a little seasoning ;
 A foolish mistake ! my spice-box, gentlemen.
 And put in some of this, the matter's ended :
 Dredge you a dish of plovers, there's the art on't ;
 Or in a galingale, a little does it."

Ben Jonson, too, has been unable to resist the temptation to introduce to our notice the consummate culinary artist of the time :—

"A master cook ! why, he is the man of men,
 For a professor ; he designs, he draws,
 He paints, he carves, he builds, he fortifies,
 Makes citadels of curious fowl and fish.
 Some he dry-ditches, some motes round with broths,
 Mounts marrow-bones, cuts fifty-angled custards,
 Rears bulwark pies ; and for his outer works,
 He raiseth ramparts of immortal crust,
 And teacheth all the tactics at one dinner—
 What ranks, what files, to put his dishes in,
 The whole art military ! Then he knows
 The influence of the stars upon his meats,
 And all their seasons, tempers, qualities ;
 And so to fit his relishes and sauces.
 He has nature in a pot 'bove all the chemists
 Or bare-breech'd brethren of the rosy cross.
 He is an architect, an engineer,
 A soldier, a physician, a philosopher,
 A general mathematician."

A German account of the Court ceremonial of this great English princess, so far as it relates to the table, is worth quoting. It discloses the fact that the ceremonial at the royal table at Greenwich Palace was not only tedious, but that the frequent genuflexions and prostrations made on such occasions almost bordered on impiety. Let it not be forgotten that these ceremonies were performed in an empty room and to an empty table :—

"A gentleman entered the room bearing a rod, and along with him another who had a table-cloth, which, after they had both

kneeled three times, with the utmost veneration, he spread, upon the table, and after kneeling again, they both retired. Then came two others, one with the rod again, the other with a salt-cellar, a plate and bread ; when they had kneeled, as the others had done, and placed what was brought upon the table, they too retired, with the same ceremonies performed by the first.

“At last came an unmarried lady (we were told she was a countess) and along with her a married one, bearing a tasting knife ; the former was dressed in white silk, who, when she had prostrated herself three times in the most graceful manner, approached the table, and rubbed the plates with bread and salt, with as much care as if the Queen had been present ; when they had waited there a little time, the yeomen of the guard entered bareheaded clothed in scarlet with a golden rose upon their backs, bringing in at each turn a course of four and twenty dishes, served in plate most of it gilt ; these dishes were received by a gentleman in the same order they were brought, and placed upon the table, while the lady taster gave to each of the guard a mouthful to eat, for fear of any poison. During the time that this guard, which consists of the tallest and stoutest men that can be found in all England, being carefully selected for this service, were bringing dinner, twelve trumpets and two kettle-drums made the hall ring for half-an-hour together. At the end of all this ceremonial, a number of unmarried ladies appeared who, with particular solemnity, lifted the meat off the table, and conveyed it into the Queen’s inner and more private chamber, where, after she has chosen for herself, the rest goes to the ladies of the Court. The Queen sups and dines alone with very few attendants, and it is very seldom that anybody, foreigner or native, is admitted at that time, and then only at the intercession of somebody in power.”

This account was written by the German in Latin ; the translation is by Horace Walpole.

Dr. Pegge, the learned antiquary, is of opinion that large dishes and great joints were not introduced till the time of Elizabeth. Game, large birds, and monstrous fish were often served up, and as they had to be dismembered without the assistance of a fork the business was left entirely to the carver, and the guests never troubled themselves about it.

We learn from Harrison’s “Description of England,” prefixed to Hollingshed, that eleven

o'clock was the usual time for dinner during the reign of Elizabeth :—

“ With us the nobilitie, gentrie, and students, doo ordinarilie go to dinner at eleven before noon, and to supper at five, or between five and six at afternoone.”

The evolution of the dining-table is not without interest. Saxon tables were boards, sometimes hinged and folding, laid upon trestles, and could be stowed away easily after the dining in small, uncommodious houses, to make room for the ordinary avocations of the household. In the halls of the great this portability was equally convenient, and the “ festive board ” of such establishments seldom exceeded thirty inches in breadth.

Medieval tables were laid out for guests on the outer side only, the inner side being reserved for the service of the attendants. In ruder times guests may have sat thus, with their backs to the wall, in case of sudden attack during their unguarded ease.

In some of the old chronicles we may read occasionally of tables made of precious metals, magnificent pieces of furniture to be left as legacies to succeeding generations, even in princely houses.

The banqueting-table of the Elizabethan period was a “ standing table ” on fixed legs, which were often a pair of huge acorn-shaped pedestals supporting the top, and rising from a well-spread base, the whole strongly jointed and massively framed together. In the succeeding reign appeared the “ drawing-table,” so called because the top drew out to make it longer, and in which, as a matter of mechanical necessity, four of the large bulbous legs had to take the place of the two legs in the “ table dormant,” as the former came to be called.

In the ancient baronial hall, when lords and retainers dined together, the upper table was on a

dais, and in later times was lighted by an oriel window. The disappearance of the upper cross-table at a subsequent period is shown in the illustration of the Duke of Alva's banquet.

When the custom arrived for a noble family to dine in a chamber apart from the retainers in the hall much bad blood was engendered. The retainers resented it, as we have seen (p. 102). And so did the guests who were not asked into the privy dining-room, but expected to dine in the great hall.

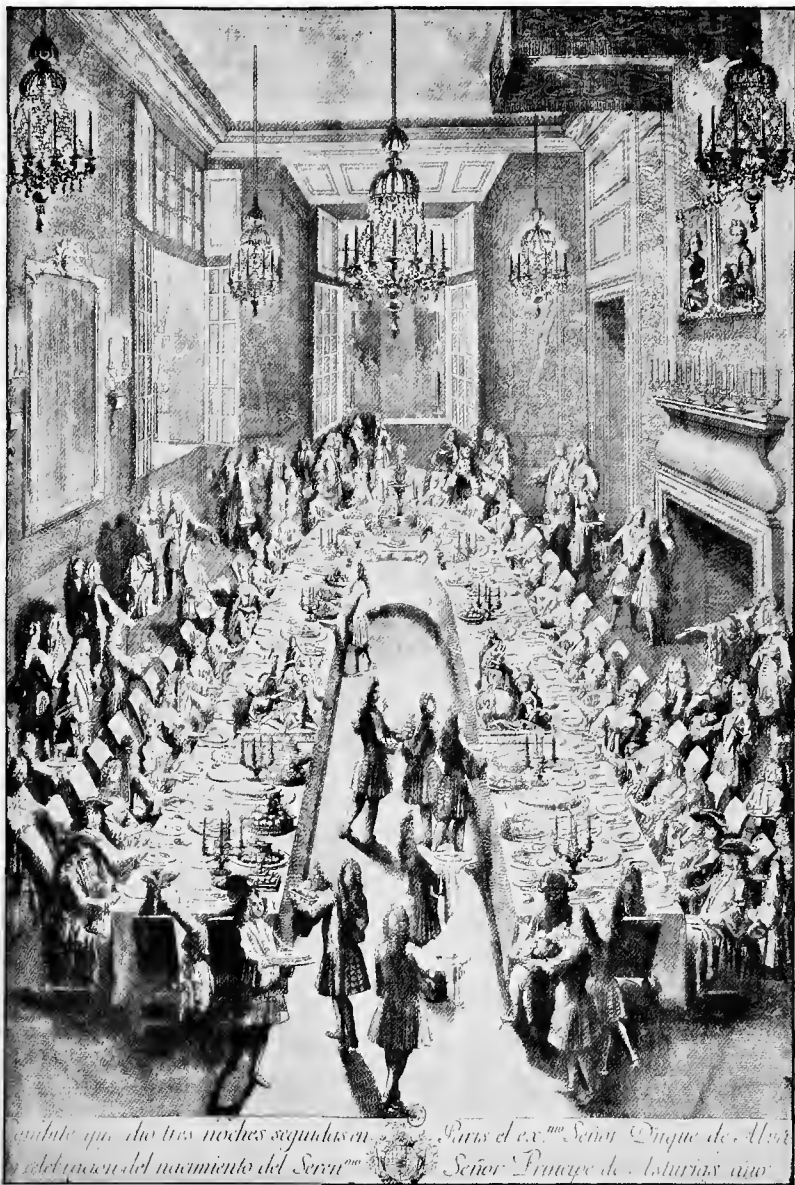
Then whenever the lord condescended to join his people in the hall he had his table set in a recess by the great window, with the "table of degrees" placed as a screen between him and the lower table, to secure him some amount of privacy.

The "table of degrees" was a development of the true "cupboard"; it was a set of shelves in tiers receding to the top, for the display of plate—"a thing like stayres to set plate on."

The number of shelves in the "table of degrees" came to be restricted with rigid etiquette among the upper class, which alone used it—"two steps for the wife of a banneret, three for a countess, four for a princess, and five for a queen." The presumptuous Wolsey used a table of six stages.

Sideboards (literally what their name implied) were at first slabs, or thick boards, placed at convenient parts of the hall, for cutting up meat, or for resting plates and dishes. Others, more elaborate, with several steplike shelves, stood at the end of the room, opposite the high table, and contained the silver or other plate which displayed the family magnificence.

At Hampton Court Wolsey's sideboard (or cupboard, as it was called, though it was essentially a "table of degrees") used at banquets, was "as long as the chamber was in breadth, with sixe desks



FEAST GIVEN BY THE DUKE OF ALVA IN HONOUR OF THE BIRTH OF
THE PRINCE OF ASTURIAS, PARIS, 1707.

From Lebaull's "La Table et le Repas."

(By permission of M. Lucien Laveur.)

[shelves] garnyshed with guilt plate, and the nethermost deske was garnyshed all with gold plate."

There was an abundance of plate for use during meals, including "candlesticks of several branches," and consequently "this cupboard was barred round about," as strong as it was commodious.

The credence of the Middle Ages was in the nature of a table and cupboard combined—in fact, a shallow cupboard elevated upon legs, with sometimes a shelf underneath. It was used in the dining-halls of noble and wealthy families to carve the meats upon, when the steward or carver would taste a portion off each joint before serving, an ominous but necessary precaution in days when poisoning was a crime of not infrequent occurrence. The credence obtained its name from its use for ecclesiastical purposes, similar pieces of furniture being used in churches upon which to place the cruets and other vessels required in the Mass. The modern buffet, or elaborated "sideboard," is the lineal descendant of the domestic credence, though perhaps the original buffet, or *dressoir*, was not a cupboard. The Yeomen of the Guard date from Tudor times, and their popular name, Beefeaters, is generally supposed to be a corruption of Buffetiers, conferred on them as the guardians of the buffet. Dr. Smythe Palmer remorsefully upsets this etymology, and asserts that the impression conveyed by the popular name is correct—they were really "eaters of beef." This authority says the name Beefeaters was specifically applied to the Yeomen of the Guard in the seventeenth century because they were famous for their consumption of beef.

In confirmation Dr. Smythe Palmer quotes Cowley :—

"Chines of beef innumerable send me
Or from the stomach of the Guard defend me."

Sir William Davenant (1673) :—

“Beafe that the queasie-stomach'd Guard would please.”

And Cartwright (1651) :—

“Of the eaters beef
Those goodly Juments of the Guard would fight
(As they eat beef) after six stone a day.”

In Froude's “History of England” (x. 312) is a reference to the “Queen's Beefs” in 1571. The argument is clinched by the dismissal of “buffetiers” as a non-existent word.

XI

A PERIOD OF CHANGE

Causes of change—The Reformation—Overseas enterprise—A restricted dietary—London street cries—Sugar and spice—And home-grown produce—City luxury—Pie Corner—Pudding Lane—“Cockayne,” the land of cookery—The inn ordinary—English meat-eating—Reeking slaughter-houses—Salted meat—Scurvy a resultant—Prices current *temp.* Henry VIII.—Salad—Introduction of new vegetables—Cabbage—Kale—Beans—Artichoke—Potato—Leek—Cucumber—Fruits—Filbert—Plum—Apricot—Strawberry—Improved cherries, gooseberries, pears, and apples—The grape declines—The quince—Rhubarb as a botanical curiosity—Hartlib’s project for a vast national orchard—Decline of cookery—“Plain roast and boiled.”

DURING the Tudor period the culinary art of England declined. The magnificence, as well as the munificence, of the medieval table passed away. Many causes contributed to the change, not the least among them being the disappearance of the display which had marked the festivities of feudalism, the spread of the narrower spirit of Puritanism, and, perhaps, the break-up of many home-keeping traditions, when the adventurous English could no longer resist the call of the sea. The overseas enterprise could not fail to introduce new articles of diet.

We must be prepared to recognise some change in the dietary of the nation as the effect of the Reformation, even if it be merely to regard the abolition of a large number of fast days and

the decay of wakes and other Church-fostered orgies. Although the "stubble goose" of St. Martin is still eaten at Martinmas and the boar's head at Christmas, the Reformation did away with a curiously significant Easter dish, termed "a red herring riding away on horseback," typical of the termination of the long Lent fasting season—it was a herring cut into the figure of a man on horseback, placed in a dish of corn salad.

It was also the spread of religious toleration which removed the peculiar meaning of the mighty gammon of bacon formerly brought to table on Easter Day to commemorate the Resurrection, by expressing contempt and hatred of the Jews. Puritanism, a little later, exhibited a spirit that was less tolerant in the matter of the people's dietary :—

"Plum broth was Popish, and mince-pie—
Oh, that was flat idolatry."

It is impossible to look back on the deprivations of our forefathers without a sentiment of pity. It is little more than three or four centuries since the Duchess of Northumberland usually made her breakfast on salt herrings. The manor of Addington in Surrey is still held by the tenure of dressing a dish of soup for the King on his Coronation. Henry VIII. granted an estate in Leadenhall Street, London, "to mistress Cornewallies, widow, and her heires, in reward of fine puddings by her made, wherewith she had presented him." Such appraisal surely denotes soup and pudding of a particularly palatable and precious kind ; or at least they were no commonplace dishes.

The breakfast of the Virgin Queen generally consisted of salt meat, bread, and strong ale. In her day vegetables were very little cultivated, and still less used.

The choice "vianders" of the fourteenth century paid epicurean prices for delicious morsels of the whale, the porpoise, the grampus, and the sea-wolf. In the British Museum is an ancient manuscript recipe for making "puddyng of porpoise," a dish served at the royal table as late as the time of Henry VIII.

The ballad of "London Lyckpenny," written about 1430, a century before the Reformation, mentions among the common provisions in the fifteenth century "stokfish, salt fische, whyt herring, rede herring, salt salmon, salt sturgeon, salt eels," &c. The eel was always a favourite fish in the monasteries.

With the Tudor period came the stirring age of discovery; and with the finding of new lands, and a freer intercommunication with old ones, came the discovery of new foodstuffs. The year 1520 is supposed to be that which is so famously remembered in the old rhyme:—

"Turkeys, carp, hops, and beer
Came into England all in one year."

Turkeys came from Mexico, and the first one eaten in France was at the marriage of Charles IX. in 1571.

In the fifteenth and early sixteenth century sugar and spices had to be imported from Venice. As to prices, at the great Adriatic port in 1505, pepper was worth 18½ gros the pound, and ginger from Alexandria 24 gros, 76 gros being equal to the ducat in Antwerp. Commerce and free communication had not as yet opened up the resources and markets of the world, so that in times of festivity a rude abundance, drawn mainly from home supplies and adjacent waters, had to suffice—the produce of the farmyard and the poultry-yard, the forest and the fen, the columbarium and the fish-stew.

The street cries of London throw some little light on the food resources of the time, native and foreign :—

“ Then unto London I did me hye,
 Of all the land it beareth the pryse :
 ‘ Hot pescodes ! ’ one began to crye,
 Strabery rype, and cherryes in the ryse ;
 One bad me come nere and by [buy] some spyce,
 Peper and safforne they gan me bede,
 But for lack of mony I myght not spede.

Then went I forth by London Stone,
 Throughout all Canwyke Streete,
 Drapers mutch cloth me offred anone ;
 Then comes me one cryed, ‘ Hot shepes feete ’ ;
 One cryde ‘ Makerell,’ ‘ Rysters grene,’ an other gan greete ;
 One bad me by a hood to cover my head,
 But for want of mony I myght not be spede.”

John Lydgate gives us many curious particulars of a Londoner’s diet in the fifteenth century :—

“ Cooks to me they took good intent
 And proffered me bread, with ale and wine,
 Ribs of beef, both fat and full fine.”

When we arrive at the Elizabethan period great changes are encountered, both in the dietary of the nation and in the practice of the culinary art.

There was a rude plenty, both in town and country. Stowe, the annalist, writing in 1598 of the cookshops in the City of London, says : “ The cooks cried hot ribs of beef roasted, pies well baked, and other victuals. There was also a clattering of pewter pots, and harp, and pipe, and sawtrie.”

To the gluttonous habits of the Londoners, Pudding Lane and Pie Corner are said to owe their name, both being derived from eating-houses ; and when

the Great Fire of London broke out at the one and terminated at the other there were not wanting superstitious folk to connect the visitation with the prevailing vice of the City—as the legend on the commemorative medal put it, *Sic punit*.

By the year 1600 oranges and lemons were cried about the streets of London—imported, be it remembered, from the land of our inveterate enemies, a triumph of trade over war.

“ Fine Sevil oranges, fine lemmans, fine ;
Round, sound, and tender, inside and rine,
One pin's prick their vertue shew :
They've liquor by their weight, you may know. ”

Besides the noise of the “ vianders,” the streets resounded with the cries of hawkers, some of whom vended such things as cooking utensils :

“ Buy a fine toasting-fork for toast,
Or fine spice-grater—tools for an hoast ;
If these in winter be lacking, I say,
Your guests will pack, your trade decay. ”

A learned Londoner has sought to prove that “ Cockayne ” (Cockneyland) is neither more nor less than the land of cookery. He derives the name “ Cockayne ” from the Latin *coquo*, to cook, and quotes an old French authority : “ Apres de *coquo*, *koken* fut forme en Flamen ; *kocken* en Allemand ; *cucinare* en Italian ; *cozinere*, *cozer*, en Espagnol ; *cuire* en Français ; *cook* en Anglais. ” *Quod erat demonstrandum*.

Pye Corner was the place where, as the old tale runs, “ pigges are al houres of the day on the stalls piping hot, and would crie (could they speak) ‘ Come eat me, eat me ! ’ ” Roast pig was a famous City dainty and was regularly sold at Bartholomew Fair,

a "Bartlemy pig" being considered the *ne plus ultra* of savoury morsels.

As the drama reflects the spirit of the age, it may be informative to recall the exclamation against City luxury which occurs in Massinger's play, "The City Madam" (1632) :—

"Men may talk of country Christmas, and court gluttony,
 Their thirty pounds of butter'd eggs, their pies of carps' tongues,
 Their pheasants drench'd with ambergrise; the carcasses
 Of three fat wethers brused with gravy, to
 Make sauce of a single peacock;
 Three sucking pigs, served up in a dish,
 Took from a sow as soon as she had farrow'd,
 A fortnight fed with dates and muskadine,
 That stood my master in twenty marks apiece."

The ordinary or inn dinner cost sixpence in Elizabeth's days, but by the time of George I. the price had risen to a shilling. At "Pontack's Head," a famous house in Abchurch Lane, there was in 1731 "a guinea ordinary," at which were served such delicacies as "a ragout of fatted snail" and "chickens not two hours from the shell."

Many of the Elizabethan dramatists make mention of the "ordinary"; for nearly every one of any distinction whatever made it a practice to dine at the tavern ordinary, or "table of the host," a term now commonly converted into *table d'hôte*.

It was really a midday meal then, to which guests took their own table napkins, and, a little later, their own forks. The introduction of forks was a change of such magnitude and far-reaching effects its adequate consideration can only be undertaken in a separate chapter.

The streets of London at this time were "envenomed by corrupt airs engendered by reason of the slaughter of beasts"; and at last butchers were for-

bidden to do their slaughtering within the walls. Erasmus, who visited this country in 1509, coming from a land of cleanliness, comments on the close air of English houses, and expresses the opinion that "it would contribute to health if the people ate and drank less, and lived on fresh rather than salted meat."

This presents the real aspect of the case. The "roasted rumps" which became an English tradition appeared only occasionally,—at what were actually "the festive boards."

Fresh meat was available only in certain months of the year; for winter and spring use carcasses were salted down. Vegetables were scarce, and few kinds of them were known. The potato had not yet been introduced.

In the medieval period the rotation of crops was not practised, and artificial grasses were unknown. As there was no winter provender for the cattle, every Martinmas great numbers of beeves, sheep, swine, and even deer, were slaughtered and salted for use as winter food. The use of so much salted meat was one of the causes of scurvy, than which no distemper was more common, obstinate, and fatal, down to the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was not till the introduction of artificial grasses from France that much live-stock could be kept through the winter.

In the sixteenth century the fare of the humbler classes in England was necessarily coarse and homely. The English were always a meat-eating nation—the price of meat was then relatively low—far more than the French, the Scotch, or the Irish. To this historic fact has sometimes been ascribed their prowess and vigour.

At a feast given at Ely House in the reign of Henry VIII. (it was the month of November, 1531)

Stow particularises the following articles and their prices then prevailing :—

						s.	d.
Great beeves, from the shambles	...	...	...	...	each	26	8
One carcass of an ox	...	...	...	...	"	24	0
Fat mutton	...	...	...	...	"	2	10
Great veals	...	...	...	...	"	4	8
Porks	...	...	...	...	"	3	8
Pigs	...	...	...	...	"	0	6
Capons of Greece	...	...	...	...	"	1	8
Capons of Kent	...	...	...	...	"	1	0
Capons, coarse	...	...	...	...	"	1	0
Cocks of grouse	...	...	...	...	"	0	8
Pullets, the best	...	...	...	...	"	0	2½
Other pullets	...	...	...	...	"	0	2
Pigeons	...	...	...	...	per dozen	0	10
Swans	...	...	...	...	(no price)		
Larks	...	...	...	...	per dozen	0	10

The same authority mentions the price of milk. He says he fetched many a halfpennyworth of milk from a farm in Goodman Fields where they "had thirty or forty kine to the pail," and never had less than three ale pints in the summer, nor less than one ale quart in the winter, "hot from the kine."

Not the least beneficent change was the accession of new fruits and vegetables to the foodstuffs of the country.

Gilbert Kymer, a fifteenth-century writer, can enumerate, besides a few wild plants, only the following products of an English kitchen garden of that period: cabbage, lettuce, spinach, beetroot, trefoil, bugloss, borage, celery, smallage (wild celery), purs-laine, fennel, thyme, hyssop, parsley, mint, a species of turnip, and a small white onion. According to him, all these vegetables were boiled with meat. He observes that some were eaten raw, in spring and summer, with olive-oil and spices, but ques-

tions the propriety of the custom. This is the earliest notice extant of the use of salads in England.

The better kinds of cabbages were introduced from Holland by Sir Arthur Ashley, of Dorset, about 1510, and were first taken into Scotland by Cromwell's soldiers. The cauliflower was first brought into England from Cyprus about 1603, and broccoli from Italy in the previous century.

According to Verstegan, that which we call colewort was the "greatest potwurt in time long past that our ancestors used, and the broth made therewith was thereof called kele; for before we borrowed from the French the name of pottage, and the name of herbe, the one in our owne language was called kele, and the other wurt; and as this kelewurt or potage-herbe was the chiefe winter-wurt for the sustenance of the husbandman, so was it the first hearbe that in this moneth began to yeeld out wholesome young sprouts, and consequently gave thereunto the name of sprout-kele." The "kele" here mentioned is the well-known kale of the cabbage-tribe.

The finer kinds of bean were introduced into this country in the reign of Henry VIII. French beans originally came from India. The Jerusalem artichoke is a native of Peru, and was called "girasole" by the Italians who introduced it, because it resembled the sunflower, or "girasole," of which name "Jerusalem" is merely a ridiculous corruption. The artichoke engrosses the attention of the celebrated "Mrs. Glasse," whose cookery-book contains more ways of dressing the vegetable than any other; it is, in fact, her faithful companion of the kitchen throughout every season of the year.

It was in 1565 that Sir John Hawkins introduced the potatoe into Ireland, and twenty years later Sir Walter Raleigh brought it into England, where in

time it became a common food. In "Waverley," the action of which is supposed to take place about 1745, Sir Walter Scott describes the cottages of Tully-Veolan as having gardens filled with gigantic plants of kale or colewort, where "the now"—he was writing in 1804—"universal potato" was unknown.

The leek had been known for centuries—certainly in Wales if not in England—but the carrot was a new acquisition about this time. Many pot-herbs had been cultivated, but saladings were now added to the English kitchen garden. The cucumber, which had been shown as a curiosity in the fourteenth century, began to be cultivated by English gardeners in 1538. Nowadays—owing chiefly to the small consumption in England—it is actually exported to the Continent.

An English fruit garden in 1612 is described in the following contemporary lines :—

"The Persian Peach and fruitful Quince
And there the forward Almond grew
With Cherries known no long time since ;
The Winter Warden, orchard's pride ;
The Philibert that loves the vale
And red Queen Apples, so invade
Of school-boies, passing by the pale."

The writer imagines that the filbert was so called because it was first cultivated by Philibert, King of France ; he also opines, which is more probable, that the Queen apple was so named in compliment to Queen Elizabeth. Of the former a more fanciful derivation is that of "full-beard," because of the shape assumed by the dried husk !

Many of the fruits now in use were introduced into this country between 1500 and 1600, the plum about 1520, the apricot 1540, and the peach about

1560. The apricot when first drawn from America was not larger than a damson. Better varieties of the strawberry came at different periods, one from Flanders in 1530 and another from the Levant in 1724.

Although strawberries have been grown in England from early times, it was Wolsey who taught us how to eat strawberries and cream. The strawberry has been vastly improved since his time, and of this luscious fruit a connoisseur has observed, "Doubtless the Almighty could make a finer berry—but He never did."

Flanders in 1540 also sent us finer cherries and better gooseberries. Later, America returned to us improved varieties or stronger stock of English fruits—the black walnut 1620, the Virginian raspberry about 1660, the Canadian currant 1705, and the American costard apple in 1736.

English varieties of apples, pears, and gooseberries had long been cultivated, while the strawberry and the raspberry had only grown wild. The whole race of cherry-trees introduced into Britain by the Romans was lost in the Saxon period; it was the gardener of Henry VIII. who re-introduced the cherry and encouraged its cultivation. The grape had been cultivated for wine-making by the Saxons, but the industry became extinct centuries ago, declining as the importation of French and Spanish wines advanced.

The quince had been brought into England from Austria prior to 1573. Real marmalade, it should be remembered, is made from the quince, called by the Portuguese *marmelo*, and when made into jam *marmelado*. Quinces and oranges were often cooked together; and there was such a preserve as "orangdow."

Rhubarb was brought into this country also in

1573 from the Volga, but for two centuries it remained a gardener's curiosity, so that its use here as an article of food is of comparatively recent origin. In 1810, when a Deptford market gardener sent a few sticks into London, he was unable to find customers for it. However, the use and cultivation of the plant made rapid progress from that time forward.

After the devastation of the country by the Civil Wars, the spirit of horticulture spread itself abroad, an enthusiast in the movement being Samuel Hartlib, to whom Milton addressed his tract on education. The public good this man effected was rewarded by Cromwell with a pension. Hartlib had a great design for the universal planting of fruit-trees and the appropriation of all commons and wastelands for this great national project. He argued that the fruit would be a proper provision of food for the natural taste, and that the child and the poor man would prefer it to any other food.

“The poor man's child invited was to dine,
With flesh of oxen, sheep, and fatted swine
(Far better cheer than he at home could find),
And yet this child to stay had little minde,
You have, quoth he, no apple, froise [orange fritters],
nor pie.
Stewed pears, with bread and milk, and walnuts by.”

The scheme came to nothing, and, after the Restoration, Hartlib was allowed to die in poverty and neglect.

If the range of foodstuffs was now becoming wider, the art of cookery, it has to be confessed, declined rapidly in England after the Elizabethan period. By the time of the Revolution coarse food had almost entirely supplanted the delicate dishes of the medieval cooks. By the time of the Georges the culinary art had sunk as low as the apple-dumpling,

the making of which so puzzled the thick head of "Farmer" George, at whom Peter Pindar (otherwise Dr. John Wolcot) poked such fun.

"'How?' cried the staring monarch, with a grin—
'How the devil got the apple in?'"

Plain roast and boiled fought their way through all the changes, and still remain the favourites of the common people.

With the advance of civilisation (observes a recent writer) the change in mealtimes was one of increasing lateness. The first meal, as a matter of course, gave the keynote to the whole arrangement. The Oxford Dictionary gives 1463 as the date of the first mention of "breakfast." Up to a century ago it was a trifling meal, a mere snack of bread washed down by a draught of ale or wine, actually a simple break in the fast since supper, and not a solid preparation for the day's work in the way of bacon and eggs, or dishes substantial enough to need forks, had they possessed them. In the Northumberland House-book for 1512 it is set forth that the Percy family rose at six a.m., had its morning draught at seven, dined at ten, and supped at four in the afternoon. The gates were shut at nine, and no further ingress or egress permitted.

Further progress in civilisation was marked by putting back the dinner yet another hour. Elizabeth and her Court rose at six, drank their morning ale at seven, and dined at eleven. The theatres opened at one p.m., and the performance was over in time for supper between five and six. Curiously enough, the workers kept later hours than the rich. Merchants dined at noon, and supped at six; artisans and husbandmen waited for supper until seven or eight o'clock, when their day's work

was done. At Oxford and Cambridge the students dined at eleven.

Cromwell surpassed all previous rulers of England by dining after noon, at half-past one. But hours were still primitively early, according to modern ideas, even in the luxurious age of Charles II. Merchants were at their desks by six or seven, for Pepys was not alone in getting down to his office by four or five o'clock. The House of Commons met at nine, and its business was over soon after noon. The theatres opened at three, and sent their audiences away to supper at seven.

Under Anne the fashionable world did not bestir itself before nine, from which hour to eleven great men held their levees. Dinner was at two o'clock, and the gentlemen tarried at the table until six, whence they went to the play. The day was growing rapidly later. Five o'clock was the fashionable hour for dinner in 1750, though the King remained faithful to his practice of dining at two. The postponement of dinner until well after noon brought breakfast into prominence. At the best it had hitherto been a draught of ale—afterwards tea or chocolate—and bread and butter and radishes. Towards the end of the eighteenth century breakfast parties began to be given at noon, and the provision of fish and cold meats at this meal created great surprise.

XII

INTRODUCTION OF FORKS

Joints served on the spit—"Trencher bread"—The "Carving Squire"—Putting hands in the dish—Italian origin of the fork—The fork an affectation in England—Coryate derided as "Furcifer"—Literary allusions to the fork—Forks used in other countries—Chinese chopsticks—Souvenir forks of Charles I.—Biblical "forks"—The "forks" of the ancients—Bread "broken," not cut—"Fingers before forks"—Bidents and tridents—Rare gold and silver forks of Middle Ages—Forks forbidden in convents—Where forks are still a rarity.

HERE it is necessary that we should notice an innovation in the equipment and etiquette of the table, which amounted almost to a revolution in the art of dining. The introduction of table forks not only had an effect upon table manners, but it also influenced the art of cookery more than one generally realises.

All through the centuries of civilisation, even up till the mighty days of Elizabeth and the magnificent era of Shakespeare, roast meat was brought to table on the spit, a servant holding it while the guest cut off a piece, which was eaten with the fingers, often, indeed, without a plate, for in the medieval directions for laying a table we almost invariably find trencher-pieces of bread mentioned—thick slices or slabs of bread on which the person could lay down his portion of meat.

At the splendid Court of Burgundy in the fifteenth century the loaves were made round ; they were cut

in slices which were piled by the side of the carver, or *Ecuyer Tranchant* (Cutting Squire). He had a pointed carving-knife and a skewer of drawn silver or gold, which he stuck into the joint; having cut off a slice, he took it on the point of the knife and placed it on a slice of bread, which was served to the guest.

A leg or a haunch of venison had a napkin (or, later, a piece of paper) wrapped round the shank, which the carver took hold of when he carved the joint. Old-fashioned pointed carving knives are still to be met with.

A dinner table is thus described by Barclay in his "Ecloges," published in 1570:—

"If the dish be pleasant, either fleshe or fishe,
Ten hands at once swarm in the dishe;
And if it be fleshe ten knives shalt thou see,
Mangling the fleshe, and in the platter flee.
To put there thy handes, in peril without fail
Without a gauntlet, or else a glove of mail."

In the sixteenth century there was sometimes used a fork-spoon—a spoon sawn into long teeth so as in some degree to unite the two purposes of the flesh-fork and the spoon. By some this has been thought to indicate the origin of the table-fork. But the real source of our indebtedness is gleaned from the pages of a quaint old work, entitled "Crudities," written in 1611 by an English traveller of some renown in his day, one Thomas Coryate.

"I observed" (he writes) "a custom in all those Italian cities through which I passed, that is not used in any other country that I saw in my travels, neither do I think that any other nation of Christendom doth use it, but only Italy."

And what was this unique custom which Coryate had not found in France, or Germany, or Switzerland, or in any other of the countries he had visited?

It was simply the use of forks at table. He gives some details of this prandial phenomenon: "The Italian, and also most strangers that are commorant in Italy do always at their meals use a little fork when they cut their meat. For while with their knife, which they hold in one hand, they cut the meat out of the dish, they fasten their fork which they hold in their other hand, upon the same dish; so that whatsoever he be that, sitting in the company of any others at meal, should unadvisedly touch the dish of meat with his fingers from which all at the table do eat, he will give occasion of offence unto the company, as having transgressed the laws of good manners, insomuch that for his error he shall be at least brow-beaten, if not reprehended in words. This form of feeding, I understand, is generally used in all places in Italy; their forks being for the most part made of iron or steel, and some of silver, but those are used only by gentlemen. And the reason of this curiosity is" (the observant Coryate goes on to say) "because the Italian cannot by any means endure to have his dish touched with fingers, seeing all men's fingers are not alike clean."

When Thomas Coryate got back home he forthwith resolved to naturalise this Italian exotic by planting it on his own table. But when he had done so he was not liked for his affectation of superiority; his friends, one and all, and every one who knew him, dubbed him "Furcifer" for his pains. Instead of being admired and copied he was looked upon as "that miserable fork-bearer," and disliked accordingly. Even the learned and pedantic King James did not take kindly to the innovation of Furciferous Thomas. The records of royal fare during that illustrious reign are plentiful enough, and we can imagine King Jamie and his friends partaking of each successive item of a royal repast, and using fingers, or

rather finger and thumb, to each and every one of them—disposing first of venison pasty and then of Paris pie ; anon of “ rost kidd wholl,” and “ boyld carpe hot,” or else “ chines of salmon boyld ” ; then “ rost mutton with oysters,” or “ sowseed pigg,” followed perhaps by “ sweet breade pie,” and perhaps “ marled smelts,” afterwards launching into an ocean of sweets in the shape of quince pie, candied tart, musk-pear paste, orange comfit, almond leach, and other goodies, all amid much smacking of lips and loud clattering of knives—but no sign of forks.

Coryate had obtained his fork equipment from a friend, “ one Mr. Lawrence Whitaker, who in his merry humour doubted not to call me at table *Furcifer*, only for using a fork at feeding.”

In explanation of the nickname being an objectionable one, it may be observed that “ *Furcifer* ” literally meant a slave, who, for punishment of some fault, was made to carry a heavy wooden fork or gallows upon his neck through the city, with his hands tied to it ; hence the word came to signify generally a rogue, a villain.

Even his intimate friend, it will be seen, derided Coryate as a finical coxcomb for his affectation of what Englishmen regarded as an effeminate innovation.

On the stage the “ fork-carving foreigner ” came in for ridicule from Beaumont and Fletcher ; Ben Jonson also flouts him ; as thus, in “ *The Devil’s an Ass*,” Meercraft says to Gilthead and Sledge :—

“ Have I deserved this from you ? for all
My pains at Court, to get you each a patent.
Gilthead. For what ?
Meercraft. . . . Upon my project of the forks.
Sledge. Forks ! What be they ?
Meercraft. . . . The laudable use of forks,
Brought into custom here as they are in Italy
To the sparing of napkins.”

Another comment on the new fashion was thoroughly typical of English prejudice. It was, "Who would make hay of his food, and pitch it into his mouth with a fork?"

The use of forks at table was long considered a superfluous luxury. They were still an object of waggery in 1647, when John Fletcher's "Queen of Corinth" was published, where the Tutor says:—

"Your T beard is the fashion
And twifold doth express th' enamoured courtier
As full as your fork-carving traveller."

Five years later, namely in 1652, which is allowing more than forty years for Coryate's hobby to amble into notice, Heylin in his "Cosmography" alludes to forks as a comparative rarity. Describing the Chinese use of two ivory sticks with a dexterity, which did not foul their linen, he compares the accomplishment to "the use of silver forks with us, by some of our spruce gallants taken up of late."

In Ben Jonson's "Volpone" Sir Poletick Would-be gives this advice to Peregrine:—

"Then must you learn the use
And handling of your silver forks at meals,
The metal of your glass (these are main matters
With your Italian)."

The use of forks began in Italy about the end of the fifteenth century; and if Thomas Coryate did not see them in the other countries through which he passed, we are not to believe that they were not in use elsewhere. From Beckmann's "History of Inventions" we learn that forks were used in the French Court at the close of the sixteenth century, and that they had found their way into Sweden.

A traveller who visited the Court of Hungary towards the close of the fifteenth century says that "at meals each person laid hold of the meat with

his fingers, whence ensued an unpleasing assimilation of the said fingers to the colour of a duck's foot, on account of the much saffron then put into the sauces and soup." This writer, who evidently knew the use of forks, compliments the King (Matthias Corvinus) on his "kingly knack of eating without a fork, keeping up the table-talk, and never smearing the clothes."

Although the table fork has become to us almost a part of the human hand, the whole of the civilised world is not a slave to it. The wealthy Chinese furnish their table with cloths of the costliest silk, but they do not use plates, knives, or forks. Each person at table has a bowl of food and a pair of little ivory or ebony chopsticks, with which every one, from the oldest to the youngest, is able to make the most dexterous and effective play. But even if they could not, good soup may be swallowed from a bowl. Forks and spoons are excellent implements; but fingers, as the proverb reminds us, took precedence with our unsophisticated ancestors; his sacred Majesty Charles XII. of Sweden was probably not the only monarch who buttered his bread with his royal thumb.

As showing the growing use of table cutlery among the upper classes in the Cromwellian period, it may be mentioned that one Charles Rivet made a considerable sum by selling knives and forks with bronze handles. He pretended that the bronze was that which had constituted the statue of Charles I., cast in 1633, before the war had broken out. He was a brazier with a speculative turn of mind, who had bought the statue as "scrap" from the Parliament, and pretended to have destroyed it—as a matter of fact, it is the one which still adorns Charing Cross. All the same, his "souvenir" forks were eagerly bought by devoted loyalists.

It is worth remembering that good specimens of old Bow china are to be met with in the form of knife and fork handles—a fine, hard, artistic ware of the middle of the eighteenth century, more frequently seen in dishes, comptiers, and dessert services. Till the reign of William and Mary dainty “bride knives” were in vogue—orthodox wedding presents which the bride wore suspended from her girdle; and some fine specimens of which emanated from Sheffield in the early days of its industrial development.

The word “fork” occurs twice in the Bible: once in the Pentateuch, where mention is made of the “flesh forks,” evidently referring to those which were used to take the meat out of the pot; the other instance is in an account of the riches of Solomon’s temple, where, singularly enough, the Vulgate has the word *furca*, which the English translation renders as *spoon*.

Did the ancients eat “from hand to mouth,” or did they, as many authorities contend, use table forks? Does the Greek word *kreagra* indicate a fork for the table, or merely a flesh-hook by which the cook hauled the mass of boiled meat out of the pot? The flesh-hook mentioned in 1 Samuel ii. 13 was a three-pronged fork used by the priests for drawing out the flesh from the kettle or cauldron. What are we to understand by the Latin words *furca*, *furcilla*? Beckmann asserts distinctly that the ancients had no table forks.

It must not be forgotten that the food put upon the table by the ancients was always more tender and easier of digestion than much of that served now, and also that it was invariably cut into tiny pieces before being served up. The guests did not sit at tables, but reclined on couches, a posture which did not leave both hands at liberty. Persons of rank

kept a carver, whose duty was to cut up the meat with a richly ornamented knife according to certain prescribed rules. Bread was broken, never cut.

Juvenal, in describing the stale, dried bread which a churlish host served to his poor relations, while regaling his grand visitors with the baker's newest, sweetest, and best, does not say it could not be cut, but that it could not be broken :—

“Mark with what scorn that other deals your stint
Of bread in mouldy fragments hard as flint ;
Fragments your lab'ring grinders cannot bite ;
But your lord's bread, how fair, how fine, how white !”

In Ovid's “Art of Love” there is a couplet in which the poet, addressing a lady, lays down a rule as to the polite manner of picking her food with her fingers—not with a fork. Among the Roman remains found in England are instruments supposed to have been used as forks—as in the museum of Mr. Roach Smith, for instance—but the rarity of the examples, as compared with knives and spoons, makes the surmise doubtful. Spoons of different shapes and sizes have been frequently found, and Mr. Smith had also a Roman steel for sharpening knives, very similar to those in use by butchers at the present day, even to the ring on the end of the handle for suspending it to the girdle.

“This Vulcan was a smith, they tell us,
That first invented tongs and bellows ;
For breath and fingers did their works—
We'd fingers long before we'd forks.”

Athenæus mentions the word “fork,” but it does not appear whether it was a *bident* (with two prongs), or a *trident* (with three prongs), but it is certain that the Greeks were ignorant of the use of forks for eating—and even Lucullus was not acquainted with such a luxury.

At Herculaneum were found a few two-branched instruments, but it cannot be accepted that the Romans used forks at table. The first instance of the regular use of table forks recorded in history was that by John, the "good" Duke of Burgundy, and he had only two. A drawing of a supposed Saxon fork—it may possibly have been used for eating pickles or preserves—is given in Chambers's "Book of Days," ii. p. 573.

As regards the use of forks in Italy, we find them mentioned by Peter Damiani, an Italian writer of the eleventh century. To warn a lady, to whom he is writing, of the great danger of setting her heart on luxurious living, he proceeds to tell her a story which he had heard from a person of veracity:—

"The Doge of Venice had married a lady from Constantinople, whose luxury surpassed all imagination. She would not even wash in common water, but had the cruelty to compel her servants to collect rain water for her! . . . But what is most monstrous, this wicked creature would not eat with her fingers, but absolutely had her food cut into pieces, rather small (*minutius*), by her attendants, and then—she actually conveyed them to her mouth with certain *golden two-pronged forks!*"

With the judgment which, of course, befell this profligate slave of luxury we are not concerned; but we at least discover the important fact that the luxury of forks was a novelty in Italy in Damiani's days—*i.e.*, about the time of William the Conqueror.

In the household expenses of Edward I. we have a list of his personal effects taken at his decease, at Burgh-on-Sands, 1307. In it appear: "six silver forks, one gold fork, and a pair of table knives with handles of crystal." Cooking forks and dessert forks were not unknown in England in early times.

After its introduction the use of a fork at table was long considered a superfluous luxury; so much so, it was forbidden to convents in most countries.

Beckmann, writing about the middle of the eighteenth century, says that while forks were still a rarity in Spain they had come into general use in France, where in the taverns knives were not placed on the table, as each person was expected to have his own, but as no person would eat without forks landlords were obliged to furnish these, together with plates and spoons. When Dr. Johnson travelled in Scotland he noticed that the Highlander wore his knife as a companion to his dirk, and that when the company sat down to meat, the men cut the flesh into small pieces for the women. The Highlander's table knife was introduced subsequently to the Revolution.

Knives and forks are still unknown in the East ; the meat is always cut up into stews or else cooked till it is ready to fall to pieces. If chickens are being eaten, they are easily torn to pieces with the fingers. There is no vulgarity in this ; the very polite *à la mode* Oriental will tear up the best bits and either lay them next his guest or insist on putting them into his mouth. The richer people use spoons, but the most common mode of eating is to double up bits of thin bread spoon-fashion, and dip them in the dish—the common dish, from which every one is eating.

XIII

FORKS AND REFINEMENT

When the fork should *not* be used—Basket-hilted knives and forks—Some artistic forks of the sixteenth century—Italian table magnificence—The double service of credenza and kitchen—Artistic spoons—The Apostle spoon—Roman shell-fish spoon—Annean knives with rounded tops—Sheffield cutlery—Knife, fork, and spoon in portable cases.

THE growth of refinement which accompanied the use of the table fork is seen in a direction which appears in "The Ingenious Gentlewoman's Delightful Companion," published in 1653, to the effect that "the accomplished lady" when carving at her own table should distribute the best pieces first, the Companion carefully adding "it will be comely and decent to use a fork."

And so the use of the fork gradually but surely made its way. Though convention has made its use imperative, it is still *comme il faut* to eat olives with the fingers. Cardinal Richelieu is said to have detected an adventurer, who was passing himself off as a noble, by his ignorance of this little piece of table etiquette—he was betrayed when he helped himself to an olive with a fork.

During the seventeenth century with the introduction and growing use of forks a vast improvement in table manners was effected; in the earlier part

that noted epicure, Quin, the preceptor of Charles I., had said that "it was not safe to sit down to a corporation turtle-feast in the city of London without a basket-hilted knife and fork." (Yet the regular allowance at those banquets was three pounds' weight of live turtle per head !)

The earliest specimens of table cutlery are Italian sixteenth century, and are almost invariably works of art, and not merely plain, utilitarian implements like the Sheffield-made cutlery of to-day. An admirable object for a museum or private collection, for instance, is a fork, dated 1552, with an exquisite steel handle embellished with busts of negroes and floriated scrolls. Equally so is a Flemish knife, the handle of which is ornamented with groups of Amorini (the Amorini are pretty allegorical creatures of the Cupid family). Even a Dutch knife of the seventeenth century has a boxwood handle carved with scriptural subjects in oval medallions. All these furnish an excellent grip, are delightful to look at, and with reasonable care are imperishable. These were the kind of table implements people carried about with them ; young gallants fresh from a Venetian tour would produce such from their perfumed doublets at the ordinaries in Fleet Street or near St. Paul's, much to the wonder, disgust, and amusement of untravelled men.

The Renaissance period was one of great magnificence in Italy, not only in art and architecture, in the gorgeousness of dress and personal adornment, but in the entertainments and festivities by which the Popes, republics, and petty princes of the peninsula vied with each other in the sumptuousness and costliness of the banquet they were wont to accord on grand occasions to their illustrious guests. Towards the end of the fifteenth century the learned Platina published a work in Latin on the varieties of human

food, the methods of preparing them, and their effect on the health. Another writer in a work on banqueting gives a number of menus, which are also very informative.

From the information furnished by these and other writers of the period we learn that Italian dinners of the sixteenth century were divided into two parts, each consisting of several courses. Some of the courses came from the "Credenza" (credence or buffet) and some direct from the kitchen; the former, of course, being cold, as cold meats, pies, salt fish, caviare and other relishes to stimulate the appetite, fruits, pastry, and confectionery; and the latter, hot, carried straight to the carver, to be placed on the table immediately they had been cut up by him.

The dinner began with a course from the credenza and was followed by a hot dish from the "servizio di cucina." Three or four of each thus alternated, each course comprising at a great banquet as many as twenty or thirty dishes. The sweetmeats, fruits, and confectionery were handed round after the removal of the table-cloth. A dinner of this kind lasted three or four hours.

Among the viands served at such entertainments we may read of Pisan and Roman biscuits with Malmsey wine served in little golden cups, cakes, some gilt and some moulded into exquisitely artistic shapes, pine-kernels, oranges, fritters made of chick-peas, sugar, raisins, and dates; in another course of large lampreys, slices of sturgeon roasted on the spit (each with an appropriate sauce), grilled shad with a sauce of raisins boiled in wine, small lampreys from the Tiber, pickled carp served cold with a sauce of sugar and red vinegar, pies of large lampreys, olives from Crete, and fish jelly made in a form with ornaments of "mezzo-rilievo." The second course from the kitchen would extend to sixteen or twenty items,

and include soup and pottages, while the third would consist principally of boiled fish—as sturgeon garnished with purple and yellow gilly-flowers, and the flesh of pike beaten into a pulp with fine sugar. In a concluding course from the credenza would occur almonds, walnuts, pears stewed in sugar, quinces boiled in wine, sugar, and cinnamon, preserved cherries, and a vast variety of sweet pastry, to say nothing of a sort of thistle (*cardo*) served with pepper and salt.

Old-time spoons—resuming the subject of table equipment—were often individual works of art. A spoon handle lends itself naturally to ornamentation. The old-fashioned “Apostle spoon” is of a particularly sensible shape, for people sometimes desire to sip out of a spoon and not to thrust it into the mouth bodily.

Apostle spoons formed a handsome christening present, especially the full set of a dozen, corresponding with the number of the apostles, the figure of a different saint forming the handle of each spoon at the top of a stem of about three and a half inches. The figures were distinguished by the well-known apostolic symbols, but every one was adorned with a wide-brimmed hat, no doubt affixed to save the features from effacement. The rarity and antiquity of apostle spoons render them of considerable value as curiosities. An anecdote on the subject (highly apocryphal, of course) relates that Shakespeare, having been godfather to one of Ben Jonson’s children, made the child a present of a dozen good latten spoons of this description, and jokingly bade his friend Ben translate them—the jest being a play on the word “latten” (Latin), the name of an alloy which was much employed in those days.

Roman spoons were sometimes made with a point, with which “shell-fish” could be picked out of their

shells. The Romans were particularly fond of molluscous dainties.

The rounded top of the dinner knife is a convention which dates back to about the time of Queen Anne, when even well-bred people ate with their knives. It may safely be asserted that few use the fork more gracefully than an English lady. The Germans generally grasp it with a clenched fist. But the Annean fork of two long, thinnish, and well-separated steel spikes was an implement few could have used either gracefully or effectively.

From Anderson's "History of Commerce" we learn that knives for table use were first made in England in 1563, though there is a passage in Chaucer which tells us that the miller of Trompington carried a Sheffield whittle in his hose. But no one ventures to say the exact date at which table forks were included among Sheffield's famous cutlery productions—it was probably early in the eighteenth century.

In France, prior to the Revolution, it was customary when a gentleman was invited to dinner for him to send his servant with his knife, fork, and spoon ; or if he had no servant he carried them with him as a workman does his tools. Sometimes leather cases to hold the three implements were used.

XIV

WHEN ENGLAND FED ITSELF

From "spoon meat" to carvable joints—Seventeenth-century changes—English home-grown food products—Saffron-growing—Apprentices object to a salmon diet—Popularity of medicinal herbs—English vegetables—"Eryingoes," and ill-used potatoes—Obsolete cookery terms—Yeomen's fare—Self-supplying homesteads—The peasants' fare—More boiling than roasting—Breakfast ale—"Cock ale"—Brandy—Dinner manners—Weird cookery—Cromwell's weakness—Pepys' gossip on the dietary of the period.

AFTER the eccentric Coryate had introduced forks, a complete revolution in English cookery took place; the mortrewes, hashes, and other messes of spoon meat gave way to burly barons and chines of beef and other large joints.

As a matter of historical accuracy, the gay Cavaliers and the sour-visaged Puritans fought out their quarrels of the great Civil War chiefly upon minces and stews and made dishes—upon what may be literally and truthfully designated "spoon meat."

Ere the close of the sixteenth century certain home products had already begun to acquire something of a national reputation for the excellence of their quality. Among the best foodstuffs in England were Cambridge butter, Suffolk milk, Cotswold mutton, Hampshire pork, Buckinghamshire bread and meat, and Nottinghamshire ale. Gloucestershire boasted

of its cheeses, Cheshire of its salt, and Cornwall of its pies. Kent, "the garden of England," had already made a name for its hops, Middlesex for its cherries and its cabbages, Worcestershire for its pears, and Leicestershire for its beans. As for apples, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire claimed to grow the best, though there was a popular ditty in the north which said :—

"He that will fish for a Lancashire man at any time or tide
Must bait his hook with a good egg-pie, or an apple with a
red side."

It was then Middlesex for grain, and the loaves which Queen Elizabeth ate were made from the good flour of Heston white wheat.

As Hampshire men were dubbed "hogs" in allusion to their pig-breeding, so Bedford folk were nicknamed "malt-horses" because of the high quality of malt they produced from their barley. The Isle of Man was noted for its oats, and Essex for saffron, which was so much used in olden times; for people were fond of little currant cakes flavoured with saffron, and they had also great belief in this herb as a cure for fever and other ailments. This plant was therefore more grown and worth more than it is now; and the town of Saffron Walden got its name from the great beds of it that were regularly grown in that neighbourhood.

Essex had a reputation for its calves, and the Lancashire kine were said to be the biggest in England and to show the finest horns and the best hides.

The freshwater fish and the wild fowl from the Lincolnshire fens were highly thought of, and Wytham pike and Ancholm eels were as well known and prized as Severn lampreys and Thames salmon

and smelt. The Severn also produced salmon so plentifully—the rapid transport and distribution of fresh fish was next to impossible in those days—that apprentices' indentures in all Severn-side towns contained a clause that their masters were not to feed them on this fish more than a specified number of days in the year.

Our ancestors had great faith in the medicinal virtues of herbs, which were regularly hawked about the streets, as may be learned from one of the Roxburgh ballads :—

“ Here's pennyroyal and marygolds,
 Come, buy my nettle tops !
 Here's water-cress and scurvy-grass,
 Come, buy my sage of virtue, ho !
 Come, buy my wormwood and mugworts.
 Here's all fine herbs of every sort !
 Here's southern-wood that's very good,
 Dandelion and houseleek !
 Here's dragon's-tongue, and wood-sorrel,
 With bear's-foot and horehound !
 Let none despise the merry, merry cries
 Of famous London Town !”

The common bugloss so often grown in old English gardens is compared by Evelyn to the nepenthe which Homer mentions in the “ Odyssey ”—the magic drug which assuaged pain and made men forget their sorrows. Nettles are an excellent vegetable, plentiful in spring when other greens are scarce ; but, unfortunately, they cost nothing but the trouble of gathering. Spinach was frequently called the “ Spanish vegetable ” under the belief that it came from Spain ; originally it was a Persian plant.

Among the vegetables revealed by the cookery-books of the time as being in use in the seventeenth century may be named parsley, “ caphers,” “ chibals ” (onions), mushrooms, pompions (pumpkins), spinach,

artichokes, rice, and "cloves" of garlick. "Turnips" are mentioned in the medicines. Fennel was used for sauce-making and garnishing; spinach had long been known, but came more into favour.

In the "Accomplisht Cook" (published in 1678) potatoes are named, and are ordered to be boiled and blanched; seasoned with nutmeg, cinnamon, and pepper; to be mixed with "eryngo roots," dates, lemons, and whole mace; to be covered with butter, sugar, and grape verjuice; to be made with pastry into a pie, and used with rose-water and sugar. From this cruel and unseemly treatment of the poor unoffending potato one begins to understand why it was that the American tuber was so long popularising itself with the English palate. Eryngo, it may be explained, was the fleshy root of the sea-holly, candied as a sweetmeat. Shakespeare makes Falstaff talk about the sky raining potatoes, hailing kissing-comfits, and snowing eryngoes.

In the confections of the seventeenth century not only were many colouring matters used—saffron, saunders, "chochineli," "blew starch," and the juices of violets, of gilly-flowers, and of marigolds—but, often enough, perfumes entered into the composition, as musk, civet, rose-water, orange-water, and violet-water.

A number of cookery terms, and names employed in culinary processes, have become obsolete since the seventeenth century. In bread they used to make "cheat-loaves," "manchets," and "cracknels" (crisp cakes). Cakes and puddings used to be baked in "coffins." Sugar and spices were "searsed" (sifted); cooks "coddled" (warmed up), "seethed," "bottomed" (drained), and "endored" (made shiny, as with egg or sugar) their products. They had "coasts of beef," "cheese mots," "marchepans," and "ranioles"; and (as we still have) "fritturs,"

“ jumbals ” (ginger-bread), and “ sallets ” (salads). “ Marchepanes,” it may be explained, were used at dessert, and, according to Markham’s “ Countrey Farmer ” (1616), “ were made of verie little flower, but with addition of greater quantitie of filberds, pine-nuts, pistaces, almonds, and rosed sugar.”

In country life the old English yeoman gave alms to the poor and kept hospitality with his neighbours. A ballad, dating from Elizabeth’s days, gives us an insight into the simple hospitality which a farmer could offer to such an occasional caller as a noble fatigued with the chase. The yeoman—

“ Did house him in a peakish graunge
 Within a forest great ;
 Wheare knowne and welcomed as the place
 And persons might afforde ;
 Browne bread, whig, bacon, curds and milke
 Were set him on the borde.
 A cushion made of lists, a stoole
 Half-backed with a houe
 Were brought him, and he sitteth down
 Beside a sorry coupe.
 The poor old couple wished their bread
 Were wheat, their whig was perry,
 Their bacon beefe, their milk and curds
 Were cream, to make him merry.”

“ Whig,” it may be explained, was buttermilk.

The honest farmer of those days pursued many trades in his homestead. He grew his own hops, made his own malt, and brewed his own beer. He killed his sheep or his calf without the aid of a butcher, and made his own candles from the waste fat. His cheese was made in his own press. He cultivated herbs for physic, which his wife dried or distilled. His corn crops were varied by the cultivation of saffron and mustard-seed. He fed his pigs on the mast of the forest, he kept hives of bees, and he had eels in his fish-stew. The

prosperous yeoman had his own hereditary indoor labourers, frugally but abundantly fed upon salted fish or salted beef, occasionally varied with veal and bacon, or grass-beef and pease, with roast meat on Sundays and on Thursdays at night :—

“ With sometimes fish, and sometimes fast
That household store may longer last.”

The sturdy farm-labourer of the seventeenth century was not given to luxurious living. A metrical account of the simple routine of his daily life has been written by Taylor, the Water Poet. His habits were temperate and industrious.

“ Good wholesome labour was his exercise,
Down with the lamb, and with the lark would rise.

He was of old Pythagoras' opinion
That green cheese was most wholesome with an onion ;
Coarse meslin bread, and for his daily swig
Milk, butter-milk, and water, whey and whig.”

Meslin bread was made of a mixture of several kinds of flour. In Scotland the term “ mashlum bannocks ” was used for cakes made from a mixture of barley and peasmeal.

People ate more sparingly of vegetables than we do now, and used potatoes much less. In Hampshire potatoes were eaten only with roast beef. During the winter much salt meat was eaten, the supply of fresh meat at that season being short and uncertain. There was more boiling than roasting, both meat and vegetables being boiled in one pot, and turned out on to a large dish to be served together. Mutton and beef broth appeared on the table very frequently.

In the seventeenth century breakfast was not considered a meal of much importance, generally con-

sisting of a draught of ale with bread-and-butter. Children drank beer from their babyhood still ; for although tea, coffee, and chocolate began to be used, they were far too dear to be drunk by the mass of the people. The principal meals of the day were dinner and supper. Ale was not only used as a beverage, but was sometimes employed as a cooking medium. An ancient dish, now scarcely remembered, was cock-ale, made, as its name implies, of ale, the minced meat of a boiled cock, and other ingredients.

At Christmas a squire of moderate means would probably contrive to have wine on the table, though beer would even then be the principal drink. Brandy was already common enough for the Rev. Robert South to speak of "brandy-shops."

"As the habit of drinking to excess was general in the class to which he belonged," writes Macaulay of the country gentleman of that period, "and as his fortune did not enable him to intoxicate large assemblies daily with claret or canary, strong beer was the ordinary beverage. It was only at great houses, or on great occasions, that foreign drink was placed on the board."

Dinner was served about midday, the diners sitting at the table upon stools, and wearing their hats. On the table of the upper classes a beaker of water was set before each person, in which at the end of the meal he dipped his napkin with which to clean his teeth and wash his hands. Towards the close of the century forks had made their appearance on the dinner-tables of the well-to-do, and then good manners directed that no one should wipe his knife and fork upon the tablecloth, or on the loaf, but upon his own napkin. The wiping of the knife and fork was rendered necessary by the fact that, even at a royal feast, though the meal might com-

prise many courses, only one knife and fork was set before each guest.

Among the higher classes the dinner-hour crept on from midday to two, and by the next century even to four o'clock.

The cookery of the period was a wonderful admixture of sweets and savouries, and combinations which appear to us now as incongruous and weird, if not in some instances positively nauseating.

It is impossible, reading of such outrages on taste, not to sympathise with Cromwell's hatred of kick-shaws. It would seem, however, that in the topmost height of his power the Protector could not have what he liked at his own dinner-table. One weakness of the great man was to relish an orange with roast veal ; and it is on record that he one day asked for the fruit and was refused it ; " the Lady Elizabeth," his consort, replying that " Oranges were oranges now, crab oranges cost a groat, and for her part she never intended to give it." Whereupon a whisper went round the table that sure her Highness was never the adviser of the Spanish War. Such is the story related in that indiscreet little volume entitled the " Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth Cromwell," which leaves one the impression that the saints fared as well as the sinners.

Pepys delighted to set down what he ate and drank, and his " Diary " enlightens us as to the dishes then in vogue. At one grand dinner, of which he seems to have been proud, he gave " Fricasse of rabbits, and chickens ; a leg of mutton boiled ; three carps in a dish ; a great dish of a side of lamb ; a dish of roasted pigeons ; a dish of four lobsters ; three tarts ; a lamprey pie (this was a most rare dish), and a dish of anchovies," all these accompanied by " good wines of several sorts."

Through the pages of Samuel Pepys' Diary we

obtain many curious peeps into the past, none of them more interesting and informative than those bearing upon the dietary of the period. Let us sample a few more.

"6 *June* 1661.—We stayed talking and singing and drinking great draughts of claret, and eating botargo and bread and butter till twelve at night."

Botargo was a sausage made of eggs and of the blood of a red mullet.

"3 *Nov.* 1661.—At night, my wife and I had a good supper by ourselves of a pullet hashed, which pleased me much to see my condition come to allow ourselves a dish like that."

The Diarist also mentions turkeys in several places ; he seems to have dined upon them often.

"1 *Dec.* 1661.—Cut a brave collar of brawn from Winchcomb, which proves very good, and also opened a glass of girkins which Captain Cock gave my wife the other day, which are rare things."

The cucumber was introduced into England from the Netherlands about 1538 ; no doubt pickled gherkins were "rare things" in Pepys' time.

"6 *Jan.* 1662.—To dinner to Sir Wm. Pens, it being a solemn feast day with him—his wedding day, and we had, besides a good chine of beef, and other good cheer, eighteen mince pies in a dish, the number of years that he had been married."

Truly this was rather a pretty idea for celebrating a wedding feast while the Christmas pies were in season.

"26 *March* 1662.—I had a pretty dinner for [the company] ; viz. a brace of stewed carps, six roasted chickens, and a jowl of salmon, hot, for the first course ; a tanzy, and two neat's tongues, and cheese, the second."

A tansy was a sweet dish made of eggs, cream, &c., flavoured with the juice of tansy, a common species of odorous herb.

"5 *July* 1662.—At noon, had Sir W. Pen and his son William to my house to dinner—I having some venison given me a day or two ago, and so I had a shoulder roasted, another baked, and the umbles baked in a pie, and all very well done."

Umbles are the heart, liver, and entrails of the deer, and in olden times were the perquisite of the huntsman. When the lord and his household dined, the venison pasty was served on the dais, but the umbles were made into a pie for the huntsman and his fellows. Hence the origin of the saying about "eating humble pie."

"24 *Oct.* 1662.—Dined with my wife upon a most excellent dish of tripes of my own directing, covered with mustard, as I have heretofore seen them done at my Lord Crewe's, of which I made a very good meal, and sent for a glass of wine for myself."

Evidently "tripes" were not considered so plebeian a dish in the days of gossip Pepys.

"12 *Jan.* 1663.—I had for the company, after oysters at first course, a hash of rabbits and lamb, and a rare chine of beef. Next, a great dish of roasted fowl, cost me about 30s., and a tart, and then fruit and cheese. My dinner was noble, and enough. . . . At supper, had a good sack posset and cold meat, and sent my guests away about ten o'clock, both them and myself highly pleased with our management of this day. . . . I believe this day's feast will cost me near £5."

The prices given here are rather useful for purposes of comparison. Everything consumed, it will be observed, except the wines, was of English production. There was, as yet, no ransacking the markets of the world to supply England with food-stuffs.

"1 June 1664.—At home, to look after things for dinner. And anon at noon comes Mr. Creed by chance, and by and by the three young ladies : and very merry we were at our pasty, very well baked ; and a good dish of roasted chickens ; pease, lobsters, strawberries."

Here we may take leave of Pepys, remarking that the terms " pie " and " patty " are both diminutives of the older word " pasty." Correctly used, " pasty " and " patty " are limited to venison, veal, and a few other meats ; " pie " is of a wider signification, including fruit, mince, &c.

The venison pasty, if not the food of the gods, is generally accounted the acme of high feeding for Elizabethan heroes. Keats thus apostrophises the bardic revellers of the old Mermaid tavern :—

"Souls of Poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern,
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern ?
 Have ye tippled drink more fine
 Than mine host's Canary wine ?
 Or are fruits of Paradise
 Sweeter than those dainty pies
 Of venison ?"

XV.

THE ROAST BEEF OF OLD ENGLAND

Origin of the song—"Collops"—Legend of the Sir Loin—Old Fuller's version—Henry VIII. as its hero—The Merry Monarch version—A spurious ballad attributes the freak to Queen Bess—The local historian of Lancashire names James I.—Diminutive beasts—The breed improved by Bakewell—Winter keep introduced—The return of luxurious living—Poverty of culinary inventiveness—*À l'Anglaise* implies homeliness—The barbecue—The turnspit—The baron of beef—The saddle of mutton—The aldermanic propensity—"The Alderman's walk"—English-made dishes—Salmagundi—Gallimaufry—Haricot—Bubble-and-Squeak—Lobscouse—Toad-in-the-hole—British soups—The dawn of hope—The Food Cookery Association.

ALTHOUGH the English have always been, more or less, a carnivorous nation, let it not be overlooked that "the roast beef of Old England," considered as the typical national food, is pure myth.

The vain-glorious vaunts of the favourite old patriotic song date only from the early part of the eighteenth century; the words have been ascribed to Henry Fielding, and the tune was composed by a man named Leveridge, a famous singer of that period, The sentiments it expresses at once betray its origin.

"When mighty roast beef was the Englishman's food
It ennobled our hearts and enriched our blood;
Our soldiers were brave and our courtiers were good,
Oh! the roast beef of Old England
And oh! for old England's roast beef.

Our fathers of old were robust, stout, and strong,
 And kept open house with good cheer all day long ;
 Which made their plump tenants rejoice in the song
 Oh ! the roast beef of Old England," &c.

The next verse boasts of the roast-beef-produced valour of our sailors who vanquished the Spanish Armada. Now, though roast beef was cooked and served in Elizabeth's days, it did not become popular till the reign of Charles II., when, as we shall see, the days of spoon-meat had finally passed, the fork having come to the aid of the carver and the diner, and when a " roast " was looked upon as a welcome relief from the monotony of the customary boiled meats.

The collops of olden times were slices or lumps of meat ; sometimes of bacon, sometimes of beef (such as we should now call beefsteaks), sometimes of mutton (which would now be called mutton-chops). In the Book of Job allusion is made to the wicked man who " maketh collops of fat on his flanks " ; and Shakespeare speaks of " a collop of flesh."

The era of the large roasted joint of beef recalls the legendary knighting of the Sir Loin ; it will not be uninteresting to trace, or attempt to trace, this old English legend to its source.

The lore of the legend is somewhat contradictory, and one of the earliest references to the " Sir Loin " is by old gossip Fuller in his Church History (1655) :—

" King Henry VIII. as he was hunting in Windsor Forest, either casually lost, or (more probably) wilfully losing himself, struck down about dinner-time to the abbey of Reading, when, disguising himself (much for delight, more for discovery, to see, unseen), he was invited to the abbot's table, and passed for one of the King's guard ; a place to which the proportion of his person might properly entitle him. A sir-loyne of beef was set before him (so knighted saith tradition by this King Henry) ; on which the King laid on lustily, not disgracing one of that place for whom he was mistaken. ' Well fare thy heart,' quoth the abbot ; ' and here is a cup of sack. I remember the health

of his grace, your master. I would give an hundred pounds, on the condition I could feed so heartily on beef, as you doe. Alas ! my weak and queazie stomach will hardly digest the wing of a small rabbit or chicken.' The King pleasantly pledged him, and heartily thanked him for his good cheer ; after dinner departed, as undiscovered as he came thither. Some weeks after, the abbot was sent for by a pursuivant, brought up to London, clapt in the Tower, kept close prisoner, fed for a short time on bread and water ; yet not so empty his body as his mind was filled with fears, creating many suspicions of himself, when and how he had incurred the King's displeasure. At last a sir-loyne of beef was set before him, on which the abbot fed as the farmer of his grange, and verified the proverb that two hungry meals make the third a glutton. In springs King Henry out of a private lobbie where he had placed himself, the invisible spectator of the abbot's behaviour. 'My lord,' quoth the King presently, 'deposit your hundred pounds of gold, or else no going hence all the days of your life. I have been your physicaian to cure you of your queazie stomach ; and here, as I deserve, I demand my fee for the same.' The abbot down with his dust, and, glad he had escaped so, returned to Reading ; as somewhat lighter in his purse, so much merrier in heart."

The story may, or it may not, be apocryphal ; on the face of it, the tale seems designed to force prominently into notice the high-feeding proclivities of the Churchmen of those days. The actual ceremony of the accolade is not mentioned, as it is in the legend which attributes the freak to Charles II.

The Merry Monarch is said to have returned from Epping Forest literally as hungry as a hunter to that hospitable mansion, Friday Hall, Chingford. His delight at beholding on the table a huge loin of beef, steaming hot, was such that he exclaimed, "A noble joint ! by St. George it shall have a title !" And drawing his sword, he raised it above the gallant joint, crying with mock dignity, "Loin, we dub thee knight—henceforward be Sir Loin." Within recent times the old Chingford mansion, formerly a royal hunting lodge said to have been used by Queen Elizabeth, claimed to possess the veritable table upon which King Charles knighted the beef. It was a

clumsy-looking piece of furniture, made of stout English oak, but very much dilapidated.

The epithet "mutton-eating king" was said to have been conferred on Charles II. by his favourite, Lord Rochester. Rochester had been the King's companion in the years of his exile, during which time they had often to dine on what they could get, and the epithet is generally supposed to have reference to their starvation diet.

With regard to England's typical joint of beef another suggestion is that the travestied honour was conferred upon it by Queen Elizabeth. The lines in which the audacious suggestion is made occur in one of those spurious "old ballads" which date back no farther than the beginning of the last century:—

"Elizabeth Tudor her breakfast would make
On a pot of strong beer and a pound of beefsteak
Ere six in the morning was tolled by the chimes—
Oh, the days of Queen Bess, they were merry Old Times!

From hawking and hunting she rode back to town
In time just to knock an ambassador down,
Toy'd, trifled, coqueted, then lopped off a head,
And at three-score-and-ten danced a hornpipe to bed.

With Nicholas Bacon, her councillor chief,
One day she was dining on English roast beef—
That very same day when her Majesty's grace
Had given Lord Essex a slap on the face.

My Lord Keeper stared, as the wine cup she kissed,
At his sovereign lady's superlative twist;
And thought, thinking truly his larder would squeak,
He'd much rather keep her a day than a week.

'What call you this dainty, my very good lord?'
'The loin'—bowing low till his nose touched the board.
'And—breath of our nostrils and light of our eyes—
Saving your presence, the ox was a prize.'

Unsheath me, mine host, thy Toledo so bright :
 Delicious Sir Loin ! I dub thee a knight ;
 Be thine at our banquets of honour the post—
 While the Queen rules the realm, let Sir Loin rule the roast !”

Variants of this popular tradition have even found their way into local histories. In “The Traditions of Lancashire” the scene is changed to Houghton Tower, near Blackburn, and the hero this time is James I. During the King’s visit in 1617 to this mansion high revelry was held, including sports, a masque, and much feasting.

The local historian of the County Palatine says that while James “sat at meat, casting his eyes upon a noble *surloin* at the lower end of the table, he cried out, ‘Bring hither that *surloin*, sirrah, for ’tis worthy a more honourable post, being, as I may say, not *sur*-lion, but *sir*-loin, the noblest joint of all !’ which ridiculous and desperate pun raised the wisdom and reputation of England’s Solomon to the highest.”

Those who would credit this story have the authority of Dr. Johnson to support them, among whose explanations of the word *sir*, in his dictionary, is that it is “a title given to the loin of beef which one of our kings knighted in a fit of good-humour.”

Dr. Pegge, a learned antiquary, though no great authority on language, says : “*Surloin* is, I conceive, if not knighted by King James as is reported, compounded of the French *sur*, “upon,” and the English *loin*, for the sake of euphony, our particles not easily submitting to composition. In proof of this, the piece of beef so called grows upon the loin, and behind the small ribs of the animal.”

Following up this idea, the double sirloin has received the fanciful name of baron, and we thus find Scott, in “Old Mortality,” speaking of

“The knightly sirloin, and the noble baron of beef.”

The association of James I. with the episode may possibly have grown out of his proposal to banquet the devil on a loin of pork. The association of Charles II.'s name with it has been crystallised into an epigram—

“ Our Second Charles, of fame facete,
On loin of beef did dine ;
He held his sword, pleased, o'er the meat—
' Rise up, thou famed Sir Loin ! ”

And this fairly well exhausts the literature of the legend.

When Charles II. knighted the Sir Loin of beef (if ever he did), and when he earned for himself the name of “ the mutton-eating King,” our sheep and cattle were quite diminutive beasts as compared with those now sent to market.

Early in the eighteenth century Lord Townshend set the example of growing turnips every third year, so that the land produced three crops in three years instead of two. Other improvements largely increased the productiveness of the soil, and “ winter keep ” was systematically grown for the cattle.

Oxen and sheep were small and scraggy well into the eighteenth century, when immense strides began to be made in cattle-breeding. A Leicestershire farmer, named Bakewell, deserves most of the credit for this improvement ; his sheep had two pounds of mutton on them where there had been only one pound before, and he was equally successful in producing fat oxen with plenty of beef. In 1710 the average net weight of the cattle sold at Smithfield was 370 lb. and sheep 28 lb. By the year 1800 they had increased respectively to 800 lb. and 80 lb.

Robert Bakewell held levees in his kitchen at Dishley, of the greatest in rank, the most eminent in science. He utterly disregarded the old notion of

There is not such dignified Beef in the Market, believe me Right Honourable every, each of it;
 Corneal market in the fat and generosity in the lean - has it not I come from my Lord,
 cream Butter, delicious, - you may enrich the Oil with a mile - no vulgar ingredients -
 only Half a Crown, perhaps, a mere trifle - I have invited some one here but I suppose bid
 I am sure for it would no suit your refined Taste.

Why look ye - Mr. Sir - I wish
 as I can not over ambitious,
 if you please - I'll have a
 piece of the Citizen.



"PRIZE BEEF."

Reproduced from the original engraving.

(Kindly lent by Messrs. Maggs Bros.)

producing cattle with large bones ("a framework with plenty of room to lay the flesh on") and maintained that the smaller the bone, the quicker would be the fattening, and the greater the proportion of valuable meat. He directed the efforts of graziers into a new channel, and founded the famous breed of Leicester sheep.

So remarkable were the results achieved by the improved system of cattle-feeding, that the caricaturists of the early nineteenth century found in "prize meat" a new and promising subject to sharpen their wits upon.

As late as 1685, according to Macaulay, the rotation of crops was very imperfectly understood; though it was known that some recently introduced vegetables, particularly the turnip, afforded excellent winter nourishment for sheep and cattle, these animals were still killed and salted in great numbers at the beginning of the cold weather, and during several months of the year even the gentry tasted scarcely any fresh animal food, except game and river fish. As to the common people, an old chap-book of the period, entitled "The Misfortunes of Simple Simon," uses the expression "roast-meat cloaths" as an equivalent for holiday clothes.

Before the era of turnips the difficulty of saving cattle from starvation in the winter is thus set forth in worthy Thomas Tusser's doggerel code of agriculture, entitled "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry":—

"From Christmas till May be well entered in
Some cattle wax faint, and look poorly and thin;
And chiefly when prime grass at first doth appear
Then most is the danger of all the whole year."

Field turnips were cultivated in William III.'s

time, but their cultivation was not encouraged till the time of George II. The cultivation of clover was advocated before the Revolution, but the value of green crops was little understood, and the old system of "fallow" was long in giving way to the rotation of crops.

Among the wealthier classes of this country a more luxurious form of living came in again with the elegancies and artificialities of the eighteenth century. Steele exhorts his readers to reconcile themselves to beef and mutton—"the diet which bred the hardy race who won the fields of Cressy and Agincourt." The common people, he says, keep up the taste of their ancestors. "I would desire my readers to consider what work our countrymen would have made at Blenheim and Ramilies if they had been fed with kickshaws and ragouts." He views with disgust the sumptuous table at which fashionable diners "cool their mouths with lumps of ice, which they had just before been burning with salt and pepper"; and expressed a wish for "two plain dishes, with two or three good-natured, cheerful, ingenious friends," which he has no hesitation in declaring would make him "more pleased and vain than all that pomp and luxury could bestow."

Swift and Pope satirise the growing luxury of the time. The former, having dined in the company of Dartineuf, the inventor of the famous dish "Darty's ham pie," the epicure of his age made known to us through Pope, dismissed the entertainment with the remark: "We had such fine victuals I could not eat it." In the "Dunciad" the travelled nobleman

"Tried all hors d'œuvres, all liqueurs defined,
Judicious drank, and greatly daring dined."

Culinary inventiveness in the English mind runs along the groove of utilitarianism rather than of ornament and artistry ; it always inclines to the homely and is seldom "faddy." But if there is a lack of imagination about English dishes, there is an unflinching substantiality designed to leave the diner with a feeling of hearty satisfaction with his meal. The cookery term *à l'Anglaise* implies something in the shape of a plain roast or a plain boil, or that the dish is prepared by the "plain cook" typical of the country.

Never were more substantial repasts spread than in the baronial halls of our ancient feudal mansions, or in the spacious refectories of old English monasteries. But the barbecue—the animal cooked whole—was the fare provided for the open-air entertainment at great rejoicings.

When the meat was roasted, it was placed in front of the fire on a spit which needed constant turning. This service was performed by a smoke-jack in the chimney actuated by the ascending current of air, or by a long-bodied "turn-spit" dog in a wheel-cage, or by a small boy turning a handle. The pulley-wheel which was on the spit was connected to one or other of these motive "engines" by means of ropes or chains.

Among the other forms of obsolete roasting mechanism was a crude clockwork. Broach-turners, as the lads who manipulated the larding-pin were called, were least resorted to. The importance of the service in the domestic arrangements of the long-dead past may be judged from the fact that the manor of Ashwell, in Essex, was held by the serjeanty of "turning one broche or spit in the King's Kitchen on his coronation day"—a tenure about as servile as that of scalding the King's pigs by which Bure in the same county was held.

Henry VII. made a turnspit of Lambert Simnel, who had aspired to rob him of his throne.

In old kitchens the dog-wheel was generally over the right corner of the chimney-piece, and the dogs employed were long-bodied, crooked-legged creatures. In large establishments, where one dog was insufficient to do all the turning, several were kept, and worked in relays. And some of them were intelligent enough not to do more than their stint.

"With eagerness he still does forward tend,
Like Sisyphus, whose journey had no end."

It is related that consternation once reigned in the kitchens and dining-rooms of Bristol, when a sea-captain, to spite the inhabitants, who had been pointedly inhospitable to him, sent out his men one night and stole every turnspit dog that was to be found. The dog it was that "ruled the roast" in those days.

A traveller in France has related that he once saw there a goose turning a spit on which a turkey roasted—the operator in this case, being a "goose," was no doubt unconscious of the humour of the situation.

The most singular spit in the world was that of the Count de Castel Maria, one of the most opulent lords of Treviso. This spit turned one hundred and thirty different roasts at once, and played twenty-four tunes, and whatever it played, corresponded to a certain degree of cooking, which was perfectly understood by the cook. Thus, a leg of mutton *à l'Anglaise* would be excellent at the twelfth air; a fowl *à la Flamande* would be juicy at the eighteenth, and so on. It would be difficult, perhaps, to carry farther the love of music and gormandising.

In England the picturesque old kitchens of Tudor

times, low-beamed and smoke-blackened, with gaping hearth where the revolving spit seemed to have solved the problem of perpetual motion, are becoming fewer and harder to find every year.

The baron of beef, which comprises both sides of the back, or the double sirloin, a huge joint which may range from fifty to a hundred pounds in weight, is always roasted, though seldom prepared now, except on festive occasions at the English Court. The saddle of mutton—the two loins undivided—is a more convenient joint.

The aldermanic propensity to dine well has given us two English cookery terms typical of municipal festivities. The "Alderman in chains" is a turkey roasted with festooning links of sausage; the "Alderman's walk" is the name given to the centre cut obtained by making a long incision along the haunch of mutton (or, it may be, the haunch of venison) where the most delicate slices are to be found.

Whenever the English mind has left the "plains" of cookery, and soared aloft to the heights of "made dishes," the result may invariably be described as simple and satisfying. The old English supper dish, *salmagundi*, was a meat-salad, mixed and decorated with hard-boiled eggs, anchovy, pickles, and beet-root. The other strangely-named dish, *gallimaufry*, was a hotch-potch made up of all the scraps of the larder.

Haricot is a thick meat stew containing haricot beans; haricot mutton is a ragout made with hashed mutton and turnips—in old French, *harigot* meant a "morsel."

Bubble-and-squeak is a dish which could not possibly be other than English. It consists of cold boiled meat and greens fried. They first bubbled in the water when boiled, and afterwards squeaked or hissed in the frying-pan.

Lobscouse was a savoury dish of beef, potatoes, and onions fried together, and formerly eaten in the Cumbrian district as the dish with which to celebrate Twelfth Night.

Toad-in-the-hole is the fanciful folk-name for pieces of meat, sausage, or kidney, baked in a batter pudding.

The French have not less than five hundred different kinds of soup, making almost endless varieties of their *consommé* (clear gravy soups, the clarified liquor in which flesh of some kind or other has been boiled) ; of their *Julienne* (clear vegetable soups, those in which roots have been finely shredded) ; and of their *purée* (thick soups in which either vegetables have been pulped or meat or fish has been pounded and sieved). Compared with all these, how few are native British soups—kale brose, cock-a-leekie, mutton broth, oxtail, giblet, split pea, grouse, and (the Anglo-Indian) muligatawny soups. Only poverty of culinary inventiveness and a plentiful lack of manipulative skill in the kitchen can account for so wide a disparity.

However, with the assistance and encouragement of the Food Cookery Association, British taste and culinary practice are to be vastly improved in the immediate future. By means of lectures, exhibitions, and other forms of propagandism, a new era of British cookery is to dawn upon us—among other reforms, English housewives are to be taught the culinary possibilities of butter, and to be made acquainted with some of the two hundred and forty methods of preparing potatoes. Greatest revolution of all is the promised abolition of pots and sauce-pans, and with them much of the kitchen drudgery, by the advent of the paper-bag cookery.

XVI

"THE STAFF OF LIFE"

A small bread consumption—Wheat exported till middle of eighteenth century—Rye bread eaten by more than half the population—"Blencorn"—On the brink of starvation in 1800—The various Government palliatives—Bread, the "staff of life" in olden times—Simnel bread—*Pain demayn*—Wastel bread—Cocket, or sealed bread—Two brown breads, *tourte* and *trete*—Black bread—Horse bread, of peas and beans—Bread-baking—And assaying—Quaint regulations for the sale of bread—Conventual bread—*Panis armigerorum*—*Panis conventualis*—*Panis puerorum*—*Panis famulorum*—Price of wheat *temp.* Henry I.—Regulated traffickings in grain and meal—London and Farnham corn markets—Assize of bread—The Cocquet office—Fraudulent bakers—Severe penalties for default—"Bredwite"—The bread markings of various denominations—"Standard bread" in 1773—Wheaten bread a luxury in eighteenth century—Bread riots in nineteenth century.

THE sparing use of green vegetables by the English people has already been noted. The amount of bread consumed was also surprisingly low.

The consumption of animal food in England has always been a matter of surprise to foreigners. As late as the middle of the eighteenth century England was able to export wheat, not so much from the plentifulness of its harvests as from the small home consumption of that grain. Six or seven ounces of bread were sufficient for the daily sustenance of an Englishman; a French traveller visiting England in 1765 writes that the amount of bread which

“ would scarce be enough for a Frenchman of ordinary appetite would suffice three hungry Englishmen.” He noted that the labourers of the southern counties ate their rye bread with hard cheese, and rarely tasted animal food, while those of the north contented themselves with their oatmeal feast of crowdie or parritch. At that time less than half the population were fed on wheaten bread ; the entire rural population ate rye bread, barley bread, oat-cake, or a bread of “ blencorn ”—that is, a blend of coarse meal. By the close of the eighteenth century Great Britain was unable to grow sufficient wheat for its own consumption.

In 1800 the people of these islands were on the brink of famine owing to war and a succession of bad harvests, and the Government had resort to many palliatives. A royal proclamation exhorted to economy ; the noble and wealthy were expected to discourage the use of pastry in their households, and there was a movement to eat brown bread instead of white.

A law was enacted prohibiting the sale of bread till it had been out of the oven at least twenty-four hours. Food was so scarce and dear that a portion of the population refused to starve in silence, and rioting broke out in many parts of England. The Acts against “ forestalling and regrating ”—that is, anticipating the markets so as to raise the price of foodstuffs—were rigorously enforced. A royal grant of £500 was made to one Thomas Toden, to enable him to prosecute a discovery, made by him, of a “ paste ” as a substitute for wheat flour.

Bounties were paid on the importation of corn and rice ; and a law was passed (the “ Brown Bread Bill,” 41 George III.) forbidding the manufacture of fine bread, and enacting that all bread should contain the “ whole meal.” The unfortunate seamen, fighting

Great Britain's battles on the high seas, had to subsist on biscuits, so badly made that when the weevils were knocked out, there often remained nothing but empty shells. All these efforts were as futile as they were fallacious, and on March 5, 1801, the price of the quartern loaf reached 1s. 10½d. ; after which date it slowly moderated, a good harvest that year easing the economic strain very considerably. The vast food markets of the world were as yet waiting to be opened by the free enterprise of British traders.

This, briefly, summarises the economic position of the country with regard to its food supply a century ago.

In the absence of the potato and other articles of food now common, bread in olden times was more nearly the staff of life than it is now. Five or six centuries ago bread was of various degrees of fineness (or "bolting," as it was called, from the bolting-sieve through which it passed at the mill) and colour. The finest and whitest was known as *simnel bread*, or in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as *pain demayn*, corrupted from *panis dominicus*, "the Lord's bread," because on each fine loaf was impressed a figure of the Saviour. Only persons of highest rank and most affluent circumstances could afford to consume this class of bread.

The next in quality, was the *wastel bread*, used by the wealthier middle class ; the name was from the old French *gasteau*, a cake. Then came a quality very little inferior, *light bread*, sometimes known as French bread, or puffe. Next in quality, was *cocket*, so called because it bore a baker's seal or cocket, as demanded by the strict regulations of London to warrant its standard of fineness.

Of lower quality was *tourte*, a twisted bread made of unbolted meal, in general use among the humbler classes and the inmates of monasteries. *Trete bread*,

or *bis*, or brown bread, was made of wheat meal from which the fine flour at one sifting had been removed. Then came *black bread*, made of various kinds of grain inferior to wheat.

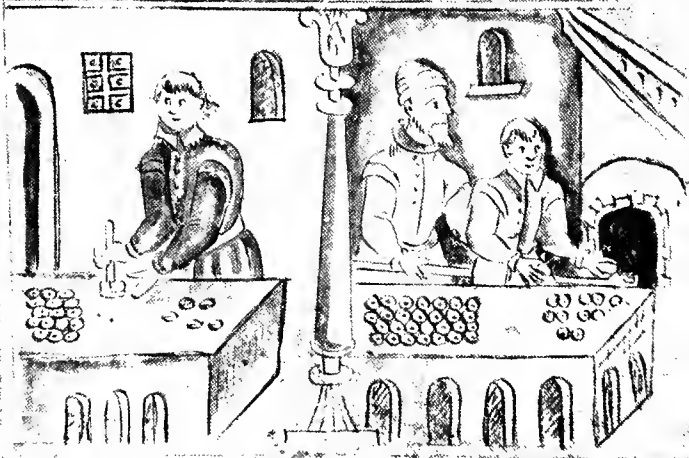
Horse bread was extensively prepared, in sealed loaves, of which the principal ingredients were beans and peas. Strict laws regulated both the baking of bread and the sale of it. The baker of white bread was on no account to make *tourte*, or brown bread, or to have a bolting-sieve in his possession. Keepers of inns and lodging-houses were not allowed to bake bread. In London only farthing loaves and half-penny loaves were allowed to be made ; each loaf had to be sealed, and all bread was periodically assayed. In the markets loaves were exposed for sale in panyers, or bread-baskets, the principal days being Tuesday and Saturday, each basket paying a toll of one halfpenny. If the bread was delivered by female retailers who went from house to house, these "hucksters" were privileged to buy from the bakers, receiving thirteen loaves as twelve, the price of the additional loaf being reckoned as the limit of their legitimate profit. Hence "a baker's dozen" is always thirteen. Notwithstanding all these regulations and restrictions, there were many frauds and their corresponding penalties known to the trade of a baker in medieval times.

In the Middle Ages London bakers were allowed to keep swine in their houses when other persons were forbidden, apparently with a view to the more speedy consumption of the refuse bran, and as an inducement to the baker not to make his bread of too coarse a quality. The pigs, however, were to be kept out of the public streets and lanes—for in those days there were city lanes green enough and dirty enough for the pigs to pick up something eatable.

God blesseth trewe labour, Be still quiette and kinde
 With plentye and favour, Reward thou his kinde



Pricke not at thy pleasure, Be watchfull and wite
 Thus in trewe howe th measure In goodwille to zile



BAKERS AT WORK (16TH CENTURY).

From an old MS.

In the religious houses there were generally four different grades of bread baked in the monastic ovens. The best, designated *panis armigerorum*, was intended for the abbot's guests and wayfaring callers of distinction. *Panis conventualis* was an inferior bread baked for the members of the fraternity themselves. Then there were *panis puerorum*, provided for the boys of the cloister school who had to be fed by the almoner; and *panis famulorum*, the special kind placed on the tables of the lay servants of the monastery.

In the Black Book of the Exchequer we find that in the time of Henry I., when the estimate for the victuals for the King's household was reduced to money terms, a measure of wheat sufficient to make bread for the consumption of one hundred men per day was valued at one shilling. By the reign of Henry III. the price of wheat had advanced to fifteen or twenty shillings a quarter.

For centuries the law demanded that weekly returns should be made by millers, meal-men, bakers, and others, of their traffickings in grain, flour, and meal of all sorts; and these returns were certified into a book, so that the price of bread might be adjusted to the price of the raw material, no alteration being allowed in the former until the latter varied at least threepence per bushel. Town clerks and clerks of markets were strictly enjoined to carry out these regulations, and justices at sessions were empowered to enforce them.

Our illustration is taken from the work of a market official published in 1592; it shows some of the stages in bread-making, each accompanied by a moral couplet more creditable to the spirit of the age than descriptive of the bakehouse practice then prevailing.

At the end of the seventeenth century the wheat

went mostly into the large towns, the rural population practically subsisting on barley bread, rye bread, and oat-cake. Much of the corn trade of the Port of London resolved itself into the meal trade. Farnham was then the greatest provincial corn market in England for wheat, till the farmers of Sussex took to grinding their own wheat and sending the flour to London by sea.

In recognition of bread as the staff of life in this country the law has provided for the "assize of bread" from the earliest times of our history. A statute of Henry III. particularises "wastel bread," "cocket bread," and "bread of treet," which answer roughly to the white bread, the wheaten bread, and the household bread of modern times. The term "wastel" is Anglo-Norman, and specifies well-baked white bread; "treet," or "trite," is a kind of bran; and "bread of treet" was therefore a brown bread.

"Cocket," as we have seen (p. 187), was a label of warranty for the second kind of best bread sold to the public. Till the time of George III. there was at the Mansion House a Cocquet Office, where the bakers of London, trading within ten miles of the Royal Exchange, had to make their returns of meal and flour bought by them during the week, every Saturday before five in the afternoon.

The statutes relating to bread varied from time to time, and in olden times the penalties inflicted for breaches of the law were very severe. A fraudulent baker might be drawn on a hurdle, with the offending loaf tied round his neck, to the pillory, where he was exposed for the expiation of his offence; and a repetition of his fraud generally entailed the destruction of his oven and a legal disability to follow his trade any more. Sometimes the penalty involved a public whipping. Magistrates had the right to search a baker's premises, and if any alum

or other adulterant was discovered a seizure was made. "Bredwite" (the Saxon equivalent for "white bread") was the name of the most ancient penalty imposed for defaults in the assize of bread, from which, as an old feudal privilege, the tenants of the honour of Wallingford were always specially exempt.

Wheaten bread was often marked **W.** and household bread **H.**; bread not made of wheat—be it remembered that rye and barley were in common use at all bakeries—was to be marked with such letters as the justices might order. The letter **X** was sometimes used to denote any denomination of mixed bread. In 1773 it was ordered that "standard wheaten bread shall weigh three-fourths of the wheat whereof made, and be marked **S.W.** The peck loaf to weigh 17 pounds 6 ounces avoirdupois, and lesser loaves in proportion; seven standard loaves equal to eight wheaten and six household." Upwards of twenty years later the law permitted loaves to be made of wheat, deducting only five pounds of bran per bushel, or mixed with other grain or potatoes, to be sold at such prices as should be deemed reasonable. Household bread was usually reckoned to be one-fourth cheaper than wheaten.

In the eighteenth century the English farmer still ate barley bread, or bread made of a mixture of barley and wheat; or he was content with bread made of "blencorn," a mixture of wheat and rye. He sat up to his stout table on a settle or a stool. Often enough the platters, bowls, and spoons on the table were of his own manufacture, carved on the winter evenings from beech or alder. The drinking vessels comprised leather black-jacks, or mighty jugs and drinking mugs of hornware.

Although meat could be bought at twopence-half-penny a pound, the labouring classes seldom tasted

it, their scanty wages not sufficing to buy such luxuries. Nor did they ever get wheaten bread. It is recorded that a well-to-do family in Cumberland about the year 1750 only used a peck of wheat in the course of a whole year, and that was at Christmas—their main diet consisting of barley bread, oatmeal, and vegetables, with occasionally a scrap of bacon.

In the making of bread it is not unlawful to use flour, or the meal of wheat, barley, rye, oats, buckwheat, maize, rice, beans, pease ; also potatoes, along with salt, eggs, water, milk, and leaven or yeast of any kind. The commonest adulterant is alum, which enables the baker to give to bread of inferior flavour the whiteness of the best kind, and also to increase its weight through the retention of more moisture.

All bread, except fancy breads, must be sold by weight ; if it is not wheaten, it should be stamped with the letter **M.**

The " Scarcity " riots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which to the period of the " Hungry Forties " occurred at intervals, were often marked by the burning of mills and the looting of bakers' shops.

XVII

SEASONAL FESTIVALS AND PERIODIC FEASTINGS

Eating together as an expression of sociability—The Roman Saturnalia—Corresponding revels in Middle Ages—"Feast of Fools," &c.—The Christian Year, a cycle of religious feasts—Yule feasts and Yule cakes—Genesis of the Christmas pudding—The mince-pie—Goose eaten at three festivals—The boar's head—The "hackin," or great Christmas sausage—Twelfth cake—Pancakes—Carlings—Collops—Mothering Sunday—Maundy "loaves and fishes"—Easter eggs—Tansy cakes—Hot-cross buns—Whitsun summer fare—Local festivities—Wakes—Flauns—Non-religious feasts—May-day junketings—Shearers' feast, a pastoral celebration—Harvest Home, an agricultural feast—Lammas, or loaf-mass—Wayzgoose—Martinmas—Life epoch feastings—Christening cake—Wedding breakfast—Bride-cake—Honeymoon—Funeral feasting—The "Sin-eater."

MAN is a sociable animal, and expresses life's sociability by neglecting no opportunity to eat in company. Men seldom fail to come together to eat, upon any occasion that can be made to offer the least excuse for so doing.

The Saturnalia of the Romans were a striking example from ancient paganism. Every year, for one short week in December, the worship of Saturn was conducted with licentious revellings, into which entered, as a matter of course, much eating and drinking. All business was suspended, and none were to be found at work except the cooks and confectioners; everywhere tables were spread out for feasting, and

nothing was heard but shouts of merriment. No account of expenses was allowed to be kept, and one-tenth of a man's income was devoted to this celebration. Slaves were allowed the utmost freedom, even to changing places with their masters. Glasses of all sizes were to be ready, so that all might drink when and where they chose. Everywhere were dancing, singing, music, and the grosser pleasures, which have made the name of this celebration a byword.

Traces of this institution are to be found among the more ancient nations ; and some few of its observances found their way into the offices of the Christian Church. It is only by tracing them to the Roman Saturnalia that we can account for a number of the grotesque sports which long continued under Christianity—the Feast of Asses, the Feast of Fools, the Feast of the Bull, the Feast of the Innocents, and other profane festivals practised with the tacit consent of the Church during the Middle Ages.

In olden times the whole Christian year was a cycle of religious feasts. The merest glance at the customs with which they were severally celebrated will show that many of them appropriated for their due observance some specialised comestible or some special dish to be eaten under certain ceremonial conditions. And not a few of these observances, as has been suggested, might be traced back to ante-Christian practices. Let us begin with the greatest of the Christian festivals.

In ancient Scandinavia, to which we trace the origins of so many English customs, a most magnificent festival in honour of the god Thor commenced the winter solstice. It was commemorative of the Creation ; for, being the longest night in the year, our pagan progenitors assigned to it the formation of the world from primeval darkness, and called it

“Mother-Night.” The festival was dominated by Yule or Yeol. When Christianity superseded the rites of pagan worship the Anglo-Saxons expressed the greatest reluctance to relinquish this annual rejoicing. To insure success to their preaching, therefore, the missionaries applied the festival to the Nativity of Christ, which hence acquired the name of Yule-feast. The celebration of the idolatrous festival was most sumptuous and splendid; for it was believed that the succeeding season would be fruitful or unproductive according to the profusion or parsimony which was observed on this occasion. The peace-offerings dedicated to Thor were cakes of fine flour, sweetened with honey—hence the Christian Yule-cake.

The Yule-cake made its appearance upon the hospitable board amidst the gaiety and other good cheer of Christmas Eve. An abundance of cake was provided, which was cut into slices, toasted, and soaked in spicy ale. Some of it was carefully reserved for Christmas Day, just as some of the plum-cake provided on this day had to be kept till New Year's Day or the succeeding year would be unlucky.

The Christmas plum-pudding is also traced to a Teutonic origin. In Germany it used to be plum-squash (*Pflaumen-grütze*), a soft, squashy mess resulting from the extraction of the juices from fresh plums; on the Danish borderland it is still so made. A black plum-squash is mixed with fine-grained rice or pearl barley or groats; these grains are regarded as representative of next year's favourable harvest.

Very similar is the “big duff” (*Grosse Klosse*) of Lower Saxony, which is boiled in a cloth; this, transferred to England, and cooked with plums, has become plum-pudding, though the plums are now raisins. For the groats, refined flour has been sub-

stituted, and butter has given way, naturally enough in a land of beefeaters, to beef suet. It has even been suggested that the practice of pouring spirit over the Christmas pudding and setting it afire is a relic of the fire worship—fire as symbolic of the returning sun—with which our pagan ancestors celebrated this midwinter festival.

It is worthy of note that the famous "Mrs. Glasse" gives a recipe for "plumb-porridge for Christmas." (A long chapter in the same work, on the subject of Lenten diet, gives various onion and fish soups as suitable dishes to "fast" upon.)

Since that time, however, the "porridge" has given way to the more inviting "pudding," which, on the authority of the *Lancet*, is not so unwholesome as most people think. At which let us rejoice.

"Who pours the brandy in libation free
Finds rich plum-pudding realised in thee!
Chaunts the high hymn of themes that far surpass
The luxuries of honour'd Mrs. Glasse."

It is the writer of these heroic rhymes who also apostrophises the mince-pie:—

"Oh, King of Cates, whose pastry-bounded reign
Is felt and own'd o'er Pastry's wide domain."

Dr. Parr, by the way, was quite wrong in rebuking a lady for calling these cates by that appellation rather than by that of Christmas pies. Cavalier as well as Puritan commonly used the name descriptive of the contents of the pie—not the name which spoke of the season in which the pie was eaten. For the rest, the mince-pie of our forefathers was, as may be guessed, a richer one than our own, and invariably contained minced flesh-meat, generally beef or veal. The "Compleat Cook" of 1655 recommends a little verjuice.

The mince-pie was regarded with holy aversion by the Puritans ; but Addison, in the *Spectator*, made mincemeat of their opinions :—

“The Christmas pye,” he wrote, “is in its own nature a kind of consecrated cake, and a badge of distinction ; and yet it is often forbidden to the Druid of the family. Strange ! that a sirloin of beef, whether boiled or roasted, when entire, is exposed to his utmost depredations and incisions, but if minced into small pieces and tossed up with plums and sugar, changes its property, and, forsooth, is meat for his master.”

Herrick directed among his “Ceremonies for Christmase ” that the revellers should

“Drink now the strong beere,
Cut the white loaf here,
The while the meat is a-shredding ;
For the rare Mince-Pie
And the Plums stand by
To fill the Paste that's a-kneading.”

Little Jack Horner, the hero of nursery rhyme, was able to find a plum in his Christmas pie, and e'en to make that great discovery without the aid of fork or spoon. It was the admixture of plums with minced meat that gave the pie its distinctive feature. Mince-pies were popular under the name of “mutton-pies ” as early as 1596, mutton then being one of the ingredients. The paste in which they were made was supposed to imitate the cratch or manger of the Christ-child. As to the “mince,” it was merely sausage-meat “at large,” and one form of the spoon meat in universal use before the invention of forks.

But there were other items of Christmas fare equally well honoured. No idle cooks were to be found in the old Christmas-time. Early in the morning the “hackin ” (or great sausage) had to be boiled ready for breakfast. Then commenced the great preparation for dinner.

The Christmas roast goose seems to have been once a goose-pie, for Allan Ramsay writes :—

“Ay at yule whene'er they came
A braw goose-pie.”

Formerly more honour was done to the goose at Martinmas and at Michaelmas than at Christmas, when it was baked in a “pye” by the rich, for distribution to their poor neighbours.

The ancient ceremonial dish at the Christmas feast was the boar's head, a course served roasted or boiled, on a platter decorated with laurel-leaves and brought to table in a procession. Its advent was greeted by the company in a beautiful carol, a ceremony still kept up at Queen's College, Oxford, and which has come down from the time when wild boars were to be found near that ancient University city. The carol runs :—

“The boar's head in hand bear I,
Bedeck'd with bays and rosemary ;
And I pray you, my masters, be merry,
Quot estit in convivio.
Caput Apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.

The boar's-head, as I understand,
Is the rarest dish in all this land,
Which thus bedeck'd with a gay garland
Let us servire cantico.
Caput Apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.

Our steward hath provided this
In honour of the King of Bliss,
Which on this day to be serv'd is
In reginensi atrio
Caput Apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.”

The strains of merry minstrelsy, accompanied by the jubilant flourish of trumpets, of which this famous carol reminds us, belonged to the brave old days of feasting. Then comes the Puritan period, when the bare idea of such exuberant festivity was obnoxious, when the innocent mince-pie and Christmas pudding were regarded as accursed.

“All plums the prophet’s sons deny,
And spice broths are too hot ;
Treason’s in a December pie
And death within the pot !”

Or as another rhymester put it :—

“The high-shoe lords of Cromwell’s making
Were not for dainties—roasting, baking ;
The chiefest food they found most good in
Was rusty bacon and bag-pudding.”

Geese, capons, pheasants drenched with ambergris, and pies of carps’ tongues helped to furnish the tables in those bygone Christmases ; but there was one national dish—neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring—which was held indispensable. This was *furmety* or *frumenty*, made of hulled wheat, boiled in milk, and seasoned.

Twelfth Day—January 6th, or twelve days after Christmas, ordered to be kept as a holiday in the reign of Alfred—was always celebrated with a twelfth cake. A piece of pleasantry was to insert a bean in the cake ; and the family and friends being all assembled when it was divided, whoever was lucky enough to get the slice containing the bean had the happy privilege of being “King of the Bean” for that day and the ruler of the revels. And Twelfth Day revels were not the least of the merrymakings which marked the glad New Year. Baddeley, the comedian (who had been cook to

Foote), left by will money to provide cake and wine for the performers in the green-room of Drury Lane Theatre on Twelfth Night. Formerly, in London, the confectioners' shops on this day were filled with twelfth cakes, which ranged in price from a few shillings to several guineas. Some of them were huge things, and all were highly decorated. In far-away times the people "censed" the twelfth cake as a charm against sickness and witchcraft throughout the year. "Eche maister in his house doth burne franckensence and on the table settes a loafe" for "safetie all the yeare."

The long Lenten fast was ushered in by a hearty indulgence in pancakes upon the Shrove Tuesday. Several child-rhymes celebrate the delights of this dainty, or associate it with its ecclesiastical origin:—

"The pancakes made of milk and beer
Are made for no one present here;
There's one for Peter, two for Paul,
And three for Him who made us all."

The allusion here is to the superstition which induced the cook to set aside the first three as sacred. The rhyme with which schoolboys welcomed the "pancake bell," which was rung from the church steeple at noontide, varied according to circumstances. One version ran:—

"Pancakes and fritters
Say the bells of St. Peter's";

though the variant of more universal application was:—

"Pan on, pan on,
Pull the big one off, put the little one on!
Pan on, pan on!"

On the Palm Sunday, and in some parts on the previous Sunday (known as Carling Sunday), it was customary to eat carlings—grey peas, steeped all night in water, and fried the next day with butter. The child-rhyme was :—

“Care Sunday, care away
Palm Sunday and Easter day.”

A soup made of grey peas and bacon was formerly given away to their customers by all Black Country innkeepers on the Shrove Tuesday, or Fasten's E'en as it was sometimes called.

The Shrove Monday was called Collop Monday because on that day the people took leave of a flesh diet, either of fresh or of salted meat. The collops were sometimes large slices of bacon. The Saturday was known in some parts as Egg Saturday for a corresponding reason.

Though the fast days of Lent were rigorously observed in pre-Reformation times, the English were not above indulging in fish-pies of a specially rich and delicious make.

On the Mid-Lent Sunday, commonly known as Mothering Sunday, because the young married couples made a practice of visiting their parents' homes on this day, the customary dinner in many parts of England consisted of a roast loin of veal and a laid pudding—the latter so called because it consisted of layers of raisins and currants, alternating with delicious custard-soaked teacakes.

Michaelmas Sunday, at the opposite season of the year, saw the Michaelmas goose on the table ; a young stubble-fed bird, tender and juicy, and quite distinct in flavour from the super-fatted Christmas goose. As just mentioned, the same savoury dish also appeared six weeks later, at Martinmas.

“To belly-cheer, yet once again,
 Doth Martin more incline,
 Whom all the people worshipping
 With roasted goose and wine.”

The old custom of distributing the King's bounty on Maundy Thursday is well known. In former times the royal gifts included a dinner in the Banqueting-house, Whitehall, of boiled beef and shoulders of mutton and small bowls of ale. After that each person was given a large wooden platter of fish and loaves—namely, one large ling, one dried cod, twelve red herrings, and twelve white herrings (all undressed), with four half-quartern loaves. This was the scriptural fare of “loaves and fishes,” generously interpreted.

In some parts of England it seems to have been the custom, after rolling about and playing with the Easter eggs—which were hard-boiled and dyed of some bright colour—to eat them. More widespread in ancient times was the Eastertide custom of ecclesiastics and laics playing at ball in the churches for tansy-cakes. A very elaborate recipe for making a tansy—which was a “bitter-sweet”—appeared in a work published in 1676, entitled “A True Gentlewoman's Delight.” An old rhyme alludes to the practice :—

“At stool-ball, Lucia, let us play
 For sugar, cakes, and wine ;
 Or for a tansy let us pay—
 The loss be mine or thine.”

The tansy in the Easter pudding symbolised the bitter herbs eaten by the Jews at Passover.

The Easter egg is emblematical of the resurrection from the dead, as by incubation a living creature is produced from a dormant state resembling death. But as it was used more for presentation

than for eating, its history and lore need not be considered further. The more popular comestible which represents this season is the "hot cross bun" eaten on Good Friday.

Properly made, the hot cross bun was said to be keepable for years, and the crumbs of a special bread made on Good Friday were carefully conserved to be taken in water as a medicine when required.

Most of our anniversary cakes are of unknown origin, but the probability is that the hot cross bun has taken the place of a pagan sweetmeat eaten in honour of the goddess Eastre, which, in order to make it acceptable at the time when Christianity was introduced, would be marked with the sign of the cross and thus become a Christian cake. Eastre was the Saxon goddess of the East, whose feast was celebrated in the spring. At one time it was no uncommon thing for the housewife to mark her loaves with the holy sign to prevent the devil from interfering with the baking. Good Friday being, above all days in the year, an unlucky day, all the more reason why cakes baked and eaten then should be so marked.

The third great holiday festival of the year, Whitsuntide, does not seem to have had any particular dish or edible consecrated to it, although in some parts of the country the Whitsunday dinner was deemed an appropriate time to enjoy the first quarter of lamb. Then some of the minor Church festivals were also marked by the annual appearance of certain comestibles on the date of their observance.

The wakes were originally ecclesiastical festivals held on the day of the saint to which the parish church was dedicated. As the different churches were dedicated to different saints, these patronal

festivals occurred at various times of the year, though most of them came between Whitsuntide and Christmas (known in the Church as the non-festal period, and therefore convenient for local celebrations), and all of them were celebrated with feasting. The characteristic debauchery of these celebrations is well illustrated in "The Village Fair," a large friese by the German artist Beham.

In Lincolnshire, at one village called Nettleham, the wake fell upon Eastertide, and for some reason was called the Flaun. The custom was to eat a kind of cheese-cake, locally known as a flaun, a name said to be derived from the Saxon *flena*, signifying pastry. The term "flaun," as employed in other parts, included pancakes and custards. Scott, in his novel "The Abbot," puts into the mouth of old Dryfesdale this proverb: "He that is hanged in May will eat no flaunes at Midsummer." An old distich would appear to make the flaun the usual accompaniment of a wake :—

"Fill oven full of flauns, Ginny pass not for sleep,
To-morrow thy father his wake-day will keep."

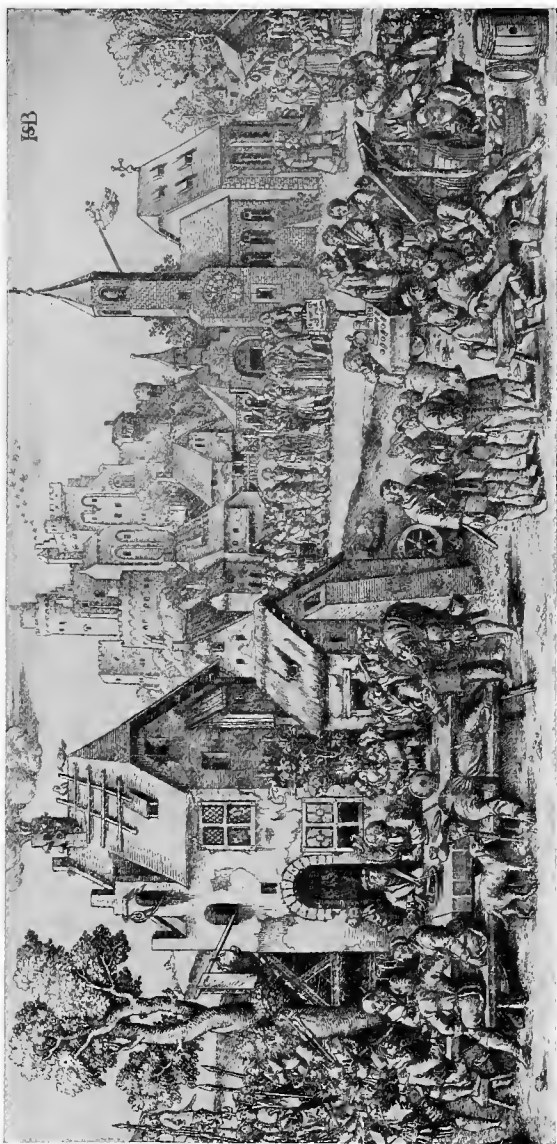
Also Ben Jonson (1637) has this allusion :—

"Your cheese-cakes, curdes, and clowted cream
Your fools, your flauns."

The term "fool," as used in cookery, was doubtless suggested by the synonym "trifle," a kind of clotted cream.

Then there were the non-religious seasonal feasting.

May-day was formerly marked in Cornwall and Devon by the eating of junkets—curds sweetened with sugar, with double cream added, and flavoured with cinnamon—whence the term "junketing" to



THE VILLAGE FEAST (GERMAN, 16TH CENTURY).

Reproduced from the original engraving.

(Kindly lent by Messrs. *Maggs Bros.*)

signify indulgence in gaiety, and festivity. In Gloucestershire this festive day was once utilised to honour the production of its native dairies, the famous Gloucester cheese. At Randwick, near Stroud, the custom was to carry in procession to the church three cheeses, decked with flowers, on three litters, to the accompaniment of shout, song, and music. There they were divested of their decorations and rolled three times round the church. They were then rehabilitated, carried back to the village in the same state, and finally cut up for distribution among the inhabitants.

Robert Bloomfield would have us believe that the grand old English squire of the eighteenth century made it a practice to feast his tenants on May-day—

“Not a face was there
But, for May-day at least, had banished care.
Freedom was there, and joy in every eye,
Such scenes were England's boast in days gone by.”

The poem is idyllic, but history, grimly prosaic, does not smile assent.

Associated with man's most ancient industry was the pastoral festivity to which Milton makes allusion in “*Lycidas*” :—

“Such as for their bellies' sake,
Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold.
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast.”

The Shearers' Feast was celebrated as soon as the last timid sheep had, with a mighty leap, cleared well away from the clipping-pen, and given that free, joyous shake of its naked skin so expressive of its gratification. The celebration generally occurred about Midsummer Day, and the festivity was marked by song and dance, and rustic sports,

accompanied, of course, by an amount of eating and drinking.

“How the high bowl was in the middle set
At breakfast time, when clippers yearly met,
Filled full of furmety, where dainty swum
The streaking sugar and the spotting plum.”

This was the pastoral feast ; then there was the Harvest Home, when, all being safely garnered in, the farmer held a feast in his barn to signalise the triumphs of agriculture. This rural celebration bore various names in different parts of the country. In some counties it was known as the Harvest Supper ; in Yorkshire it was the Mel-Supper, the reapers all shouting “Mel !” as they brought the last load home ; and in Kent it was known as the Kern Supper. “Kerning” meant corn-bearing, and an image dressed up with corn, which the reapers carried before them, was called the “Kern Baby.” In the North of England the name Churn Supper was used ; but whatever the name, the origin seems to have been derived from the Levitical injunction, “. . . and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf, the first fruits of your harvest, unto the priest.” The Jews celebrated the Feast of Harvest, and a similar institution was known in Ancient Greece.

At the English feast of the In-gathering, the last grain cut was brought home on its wagon, called the Hock Cart, surmounted by a figure formed of a sheaf with gay dressings, presumably to represent the Goddess Ceres.

“Home came the jovial Hockey load,
Last of the whole year’s crop ;
And Grace among the green boughs rode
Right plump upon the top.”

The hospitality of the old-fashioned harvest supper is now almost a thing of the past. The Harvest Festivals of the Church seem to have taken its place.

Another forgotten festival was Lammas, kept on the first of August. It was of pagan origin, and celebrated the realisation of the first-fruits of the earth, and more particularly the grain harvest. When Christianity was introduced the day continued to be observed as a festival on these grounds, and from a loaf being the usual offering at church, the service on that day came to be called "Hlaf-mass" or "Loaf-mass," subsequently shortened to Lammas.

Allied with these industrial celebrations was the Bean Feast or Wayzgoose. This was the annual feast given to workpeople and apprentices in other forms of labour by their employers. The former name indicates that it originally occurred in the bean season, when that article of diet entered largely into the bill of fare on such occasions; the other term shows that sometimes the crowning dish of the entertainment was a wayz-goose—that is, a stubble goose, *wayz* literally meaning "a bundle of straw."

In Northumberland, at the great winter slaughtering of beasts, at Martinmas, puddings were made by stuffing the entrails with "pudding-meat," consisting of blood, suet, and groats; when boiled they were called black-puddings. It is interesting to note that a similar celebration took place in Germany, and it was called the "feast of sausages." This day was a great festival on the Continent, the new wines then being tasted for the first time.

Naturally the three great epochs in the life of a man—his entrance into the world, his selection of his life's partner, and his departure from the world—have been made the occasion of religious observances, all of them duly accompanied by appropriate feastings.

When the infant is christened there must be a family gathering round the festive board to welcome the new-comer. Though the child cannot take part in this festivity, honour is supposed to be done it by the provision of a christening cake for the company to eat.

Later in life comes that curious nondescript meal known as the Wedding Breakfast, the *pièce de résistance* of which is another of those cakes which we seem to overtake like milestones on the journey of life. The feast on this occasion is a Breakfast because the "haste to the wedding" is supposed to preclude the possibility of a meal till the ceremony is over.

A Bride Cake was originally composed of many rich and aromatic ingredients, and crowned with an icing made of white sugar and bitter almonds, emblematical of the pleasure and pain which are incidental to the married state.

An important ceremony was that of passing small portions of the wedding cake through the wedding ring, and it had to be performed with scrupulous exactness. The bride held the ring between the finger and thumb of her right hand, through which the groom passed each portion of the cake nine times, previously cut by other individuals of the party into disposable pieces for the purpose. These he delivered in succession to the bride's-maids, who sealed them up carefully and regarded them as amulets of inestimable value.

If the fair maid deposited this amulet in the foot of her left stocking, and placed it under her pillow on going to rest, she would surely dream of the man destined by fate to be her partner for life.

Among the Romans it was customary to eat walnuts at weddings. The "double robe" of this nut, consisting of the soft husk and the hard shell, were

supposed to resemble the membranes wherein the embryo infant was enfolded. The bridegroom also scattered nuts for boys to scramble after, thereby intimating that henceforth the new husband intended to lay aside the sports of boyhood.

The first month after marriage is termed the honeymoon, a name derived from the custom of the ancient Teutonic nations of indulging themselves in the drinking of a liquor made from honey, for thirty days successively, after the marriage of their chief men.

Last stage of all, when life's fretful journey is o'er, are the funeral customs, which, in bygone days, were as numerous as they were strange. When a large company was invited to grace the obsequies, an attendant went round among the guests to serve them with ale or with wine, and in the handle of the containing tankard was always a piece of lemon-peel—possibly to represent the bitterness of death. In Yorkshire guests were given light sweetened cakes to eat, sometimes accompanied by hot spiced ale. Or if the funeral were in the house of the richer sort, instead of ale burnt wine and savory biscuits were given. In either case some of the cake or biscuit had to be carried home to the family, and the paper in which these were wrapped was printed on one side with a coffin, skull and cross-bones, hour-glass and spades, or other symbols of mortality, and were sealed with black wax.

The Romans not only feasted the friends of the deceased, but distributed meat to the persons employed ; in olden England food was similarly distributed among the poor.

“Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.”

No more curious custom ever existed than that

performed in ancient times by the person known as the "Sin-eater," who attended a funeral and took upon himself, for a small consideration, the sins of the deceased, whose soul might thus be delivered from purgatory. The sin-eater, generally a poor old man, came to the door of the house in which the deceased lay, and one of the family took out to him a "cricket" (or low stool) upon which he sat, facing the door. He was then given a groat to put in his pocket, a crust of bread to eat, and a bowl of ale, which he drank at a draught. After this ceremonial performance, he rose from his seat and solemnly pronounced "the ease and rest of the soul departed, for which he would pawn his own soul." Surely the idea of this remarkable custom was borrowed from that of the Jewish scapegoat.

XVIII

LOCAL COMESTIBLES OF WIDESPREAD FAME

A ready supply of raw material necessary—Cornish squab pies—*Pâtés de foies gras*—Oxford mutton pies—Eccles cakes—Pomfret cakes—Banbury cakes—Richmond “Maids of Honour”—Legend of the Simnel cake—Shrewsbury cakes—Chelsea buns—“Sally Lunns”—Bath buns—Scones—Newark Penny Loaf Day—Kidderminster Farthing Loaf Day.

CERTAIN desirable comestibles have their names inseparably associated with the place of their origin or native invention, as Yorkshire pudding and Norfolk dumplings, Yarmouth bloaters and Aberdeen haddocks. This is particularly the case with some of our daintiest cakes, and, in some instances, it is doubtful whether one ever gets the genuine article outside the place of its origin—say, a Bakewell pudding elsewhere than in Derbyshire.

Two conditions were no doubt necessary to the commercial building up of a reputation for any local edible—an abundant or a special supply of the raw material constituting the ingredients or base worked upon; and the enterprise or talent to take advantage of that supply, and develop it to the fullest of its possibilities. Not a few local reputations of this kind, however, have been made by pure accident.

The most universally known of all local dishes is surely Yorkshire pudding—batter enriched by the

gravy of a roasted joint. But Yorkshire fame in the matter seems to be quite fortuitous. Lincolnshire used to indulge in a pie of eels and ox-tails. Eel-pies were not unknown on the Thames, nor herring-pies at Yarmouth.

“Cornwall squab pie, and Devon white-pot brings;
And Leicester beans and bacon, food of kings.”

In the Cornish squab pie fish, apples, onions, and pork are all incongruously blended. The Cornish pasty now sold in London for luncheon or supper dishes is baked torpedo-shape, and contains pork, rabbit, beef, kidney, parsley, potatoes, onions, bacon, and other ingredients. This is incongruity. Now for inhumanity in the concoction of a delicacy.

When Strasbourg first became famous for its *pâtés de foie gras*, a cruel practice was resorted to for enlarging the birds' livers at the expense of the other parts of its body. The geese were placed alive in an oven which was gradually heated until the liver attained its greatest size. This practice has long been abolished, and the birds are now closely confined to prevent their moving, while they are fed on a nourishing paste, and given sulphurated water to drink. Thus is progress marked by the refinement of cruelty. By the French the goose is little esteemed, its flesh being considered coarse and unwholesome. The livers and thighs, however, made into pies, and properly truffled—*pâtés de foie gras*—are reckoned by their gastronomers as very delicate. The department of Perigord, with Toulouse and Bayonne, used to cook annually for the rest of the world 120,000 of these “lethiferous pies.”

Oxford, in the middle of the eighteenth century, had its well-known pastrycook, Ben Tyrrell, who was famous among the undergraduates of his day for the excellence of his mutton-pies.

“ Let Christmas boast her customary treat,
A mixture strange of suet, currants, meat,
Where various tastes combine, the greasy and the sweet ;
Let glad Shrove Tuesday bring the pancake thin,
Or fritter rich, with apples stored within ;
On Easter Sunday be the pudding seen,
To which the tansey lends her sober green ;
And when great London hails her annual Lord,
Let quiv’ring custard crown the aldermanic board.
But Ben prepares a more delicious mess,
Substantial fare, a breakfast for Quess Bess.
What dainty epicure, or greedy glutton,
Would not prefer his pie that’s made of mutton ?
Each different country boasts a diff’rent taste,
And owes its fame to pudding and to paste ;
Squab pie in Cornwall only can they make,
In Norfolk dumplings, and in Salop cake ;
But Oxford now from all shall bear the prize,
Fam’d, as for sausages, for mutton pies.”

From famous pastry we pass next to confectionery of far-reaching repute, merely calling attention by the way to Gloucester’s royal lamprey pies, mentioned on p. 88.

The Eccles cake, indigenous to the Lancashire town which names it, is an ancient edible surviving some religious festival of the place, the origin of which, as the name implies, was connected with the Church.

Pomfret cakes advertise the name of the small but ancient borough of Pontefract, and are made of liquorice, a plant much grown in the neighbourhood.

The Banbury cake is an oval piece of pastry of exquisite flaky sweetness, unrivalled throughout England to this day.

Banbury is more celebrated for its cakes than for any of the political or historic episodes with which its name has been connected. Its staple commodities once seem to have been cheese and cakes ; the

former, even in Shakespeare's time, appear to have been celebrated; for Bardolph, when accused by Slender of robbing him of his two milled sixpences, exclaims, "You Banbury cheese!" This comparison was in allusion to his thinness, the Banbury cheese being a rich milk cheese of only an inch in thickness. A local saying was of similar significance—"As thin as a Banbury cheese, nothing but paring." There is a recipe for making Banbury Cheese in MS. Sloane, 1201.

The historian of Richmond, Surrey, says that the visitor to that charming spot would make but a very incomplete pilgrimage if he did not turn into a confectioner's shop and lunch on the delicious cheese-cakes called "Maids of Honour," for which the place is so famous. The cakes are said to have been so named by George II., because they were introduced to the royal table by some of the Queen's maids of honour. In the time of George III. the tables at Windsor and at Kew were regularly supplied with these cheese-cakes. They are now manufactured at almost all the confectioners' shops in the town, but it is unknown where the original patent or recipe for their composition came from. A sensation was once created by a report that a thousand pounds had been given for this patent, upon which occasion the wits delivered themselves of the comment epigrammatic:—

"Some recipes are rather dearly bought,
Such as quack remedies for all diseases;
Powders and pills with such rare virtue fraught
That no man needs to die unless he pleases.

But let us speak of him, that man of sweets,
Of buns and tarts, preserves, and patties savoury,
Who gives the folks at Richmond luscious treats—
He really must have been a man of bravery.

For lo! he gave for one small recipe—
 And sure he must be deemed a splendid donor—
 A sum that might well solace you and me,
 One thousand pounds to make a Maid of Honour."

Whatever happened a century or so ago, the patent is now thrown open to all the *cuisiniers* of the town and, as the jokers there say, "men of reputation sell maids of honour for a penny." For a couple of centuries the famous cakes have been the subject of numerous jokes and riddles. Lord William Lennox once propounded the conundrum, "Where would a soldier choose to be quartered at Richmond?" Answer: "At Billet's, for there he would be sure to meet with an excellent billet among the Maids of Honour." Billet, of course, was a well-known pastrycook in the town. Then there was the joke played off upon the lady visitor who was a stranger to Richmond. "Don't you know this is so courtly a place, and so completely under the influence of State etiquette, that everything in Richmond is called after the functionaries of the palace? For instance, a capon here is called a Lord Chamberlain, a goose is called a Lord Steward, a gooseberry-tart an Usher of the Black Rod, and so forth." The lady presently convulsed the whole party by asking the servant, in the blandest of tones, to bring up an "Usher of the Black Rod," if she had one cold in the house!

It will be seen that these famous cakes at least conspire, with Maid of Honour Row on Richmond Green, to keep alive the memory of the bygone glories of the place. London's famous thoroughfare, Piccadilly, derives its name (according to Pennant the antiquary) from "a sort of cake or turnover called Piccadillas which were sold in the fields about there."

The cost and description (as contained in the Lansdowne MSS.) of a Richmond dinner some three

hundred and fifty years ago may be interesting for two reasons. The record shows the intimate connection between the Court and Richmond in an earlier era than that of George II.; and the item "Maiden's Gains" suggests itself as an earlier name for "Maids of Honour." About Christmas, in 1508, some of the Court officials of Henry VIII. dined together at the village of Shene, now called Richmond, the following being the items of the bill:—

"For brede, 12d.; ale, 3s. 4d.; wyne, 10d.; two leynes mutton, 8d.; maribones, 6d.; poudred beef, 5d.; two capons, 2s.; two geese, 14d.; five conyes, 15d.; one legge moton, 5lb. weight, 4d.; six plovers, 18d.; six pigeons, 5d.; two dozen larkes, 12d.; salt sauce, 6d.; butter and eggs, 10d.; maiden's gaynes, 12d.; herbes, 1d.; spices, 2s. 4d.; floure, 4d.; whight cuppes and cruses, 6d."

It was an old custom in some parts of the country to make, during Lent and Easter, a kind of rich and expensive pastry called Simnel cake. They were raised cakes, the crust of which was made with fine flour and water, coloured a deep yellow with saffron, and the interior was filled with the materials of a very rich plum cake, with plenty of candied lemon-peel and other goodies on the top. The name Simnel is derived from the Latin *simila*, "fine flour." The father of Lambert Simnel, the well-known pretender to the crown of Henry VII., was said to be a baker, and a maker of Simnel cakes. A Shropshire legend pretends that these cakes were first made at Shrewsbury by an honest couple named Simon and Nelly, who quarrelled about the method of cooking their joint production, one wanting to bake it, the other to boil it. The dispute ended in a compromise—they agreed to boil it first and bake it afterwards, and in token of this blessed agreement they called it after their own conjoined names—"Sim-nell!" The legend has about as much truth in it as the majority of such tales.

At Christmas-time Shrewsbury shops are still redolent with the sweetness of Simnells, their shells of paste tinged with saffron, looking like golden caskets full of fruity richness. At the same season of the year the display of "Christmas brawn" shows that the Salopian capital also continues to uphold its reputation in this direction.

The Shrewsbury cake is a lineal descendant of the ancient Simnel cake, and was once sold in great quantities to the thousands of visitors which the race-meetings attracted. The poet Shenstone speaks of this delicious sweet-cake "rend'ring through Britain's isle Salopian praises known." A famous maker of the delicacy was one Pailin. "Oh, Pailin! prince of cake-compounders! the mouth liquefies at thy very name!" exclaims the enthusiastic admirer. And as we may read in "Ingoldsby."—

"She gave him a roll and a bun
And a Shrewsbury cake
Of Pailin's own make."

The Shrewsbury cake is a very superior kind of "shortbread."

Chelsea was famous for its buns two centuries ago. Swift, in his "Journal to Stella," 1712, writes :—

"Pray are not the buns sold here in our town as the rare Chelsea buns?"

It was for many years the custom of the Royal Family, the nobility, and the gentry to patronise the Bun House in the morning. George II. and Queen Caroline and the princesses often paid visits, and so did George III. and Queen Charlotte. The last-named presented the proprietress, Mrs. Hand, with a large silver mug.

XIX

COUNTY FEASTS

County Associations in London—Attend Divine Service—And afterwards dine together—A Wiltshire Re-union, 1654—A Huntingdon County Feast, 1678—Yorkshire Society's first meeting, 1678—"The Yorkshire Feast Song"—D'Urfey's ode on "The Revolution" of 1688—A Kentish Anniversary Feast, 1701—Other county celebrations in London trade halls—Musical associations.

DURING the latter half of the seventeenth century, and for many years after the commencement of that following, there were institutions known as County Feasts. These were annual assemblages of the gentry and others, natives of certain principal English counties, who were inhabitants of London.

The celebration was commenced by the company attending Divine Service at one of the city churches (usually that of St. Mary-le-Bow), and hearing a sermon preached by a native of, or one holding preferment in, the county being honoured; afterwards they dined together in the hall of one of the city companies hired for the occasion.

When travelling facilities were few, slow, and uncertain, it may readily be conceived with what interest an annual assembly like a County Feast would be regarded.

Not only was there the pleasant reunion of those long resident in the great city to talk over the

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cherished recollections of old times, and scenes and beings far away; but each year would possibly bring some later comer, whose tidings of the more recent doings in the much-loved locality would impart a fresh interest to the meeting.

In 1654 the Men of Wiltshire dined together; the sermon preached on the occasion was published the following year with the title—

“The First Dish at the Wiltshire Feast, November 9, 1654, or a Sermon Preached at Lawrence Jury to those that there offered their Peace Offerings, and went thence to Dine at Marchant-Taylors’ Hall. By Samuel Annesley, LL.D. Minister of the Gospel at John Evangelist’s, London.”

The sermons preached at the County Feasts appear to have generally been printed.

The “*Biographia Dramatica*” mentions a piece entitled “The Huntingdon Divertisement; or, an Enterlude for the general Entertainment at the County Feast held at Merchant Taylors’ Hall, June 20, 1678,” the scene of which, it tells us, lies in Hinchinbrooke grove, fields, and meadows.

The men of Yorkshire met for their first feast on December 3, 1678.

Occasionally more than ordinary pains were taken to increase the interest in, and add to, the splendour of the feast. Thus, in March, 1689-90, we find the Yorkshire meeting announced in the *London Gazette* (then the ordinary vehicle for such intimations), as follows :—

“The Annual Yorkshire Feast will be held the 27th instant, at Merchant Taylors’ Hall in Threadneedle Street, where will be a very splendid Entertainment of all sorts of Vocal and Instrumental Musick. Tickets are to be had at Man’s Coffee-House at Charing Cross, at Clifford’s Inn Coffee-House in Fleet Street, and at Blew-Coats Coffee-House in Swithin’s Alley, near the Royal Exchange in Cornhill.”

The "very splendid Entertainment of all sorts of Vocal and Instrumental Musick" promised in this advertisement was the Ode written by D'Urfey in celebration of the Revolution of 1688, and the part taken therein by the men of Yorkshire; it was set to music by Henry Purcell, to the admirers of whose genius it is well known under the name of "The Yorkshire Feast Song." The performance of this ode, D'Urfey tells us, cost nearly £100—no inconsiderable sum to be expended on such an object at that period.

The *English Post* newspaper of November 21, 1701, gives us the following account of the Kentish meeting :—

"Yesterday being the Anniversary Feast of the Natives of the County of Kent, an excellent Sermon was preached before them by Dr. Stanhop at Bow Church; after which they went to dine at Merchant Taylors' Hall, the famous strong Man carrying a large Tree before them, followed by several others with large boughs as a Memorial of the Stratagem whereby their Predecessors preserved their ancient liberties and customs when King William the Conqueror came to Scoanscomb [Swanscombe], near Gravesend. There followed Trumpets, Hoyboys, and Kettle Drums, a handsome appearance of Gentlemen of the County; and after Dinner the Strong Man was chosen one of the Stewards for the year succeeding."

The preacher, Dr. George Stanhope, was then Vicar of Lewisham; he subsequently held the living of St. Nicholas, Deptford, and later became Dean of Canterbury. The "famous strong Man" was William Joyce, a native of the county, who, under the name of "the English Samson," was wont to exhibit feats of bodily strength at Bartholomew and other fairs, and was on one occasion at least called upon to display his powers for the special delectation of his Majesty King William III.

The counties whose natives held these celebrations

included Dorsetshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Herefordshire, Huntingdonshire, Kent, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Wiltshire, Worcestershire, and Yorkshire. Although Merchant Taylors' Hall appears to have been the favourite place of meeting, the halls of the Drapers', Stationers', and Haberdashers' Companies were occasionally resorted to.

The latest gathering of which any record exists was that of the natives of Herefordshire on February 7, 1727-8, when Dr. Thomas Bisse, Chancellor of Hereford, so well known in connection with the establishment of the meetings of the Three Choirs of Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford, preached, at St. Michael's, Cornhill.

County Associations exist in London and other large cities at the present day. As long as local patriotism flourishes, and sentiment sways the human heart, they will be popular; by means of such associations old acquaintances are renewed, the happy days of childhood are recalled, and many cherished memories brightened up again. And, be sure of this, there will always be a "feast."

XX

THE COOK AND HIS ART

The art of the cook—Enlarges the resources of mankind—Ancient whimsical cookery—A pig roasted one side and boiled the other—Fish and flesh counterfeited in vegetables—Greek writers on cookery—An epic of good eating—The master cook, a culinary artist—The art introduced by the Normans—Richard II.'s eminent cook—"Forme of Cury"—Saffron—"Blank-mang"—"Fysshe"—"Sawse"—The cook's arms—Chaucer's cook—The cook's influence on daily life—The cook as a comic character—As a physician—Feats of cookery—Some notable cooks—Mighty intellects devoted to culinary art—The *Cordon Bleu*—The Consultant-chef—State of the culinary art in England—Cottage cookery in 1620.

AS indicated in the opening chapter, the economy of the kitchen is only a counterpart, in its simplicity or complication, its rudeness or luxury, of the economy of the State. The perfectibility of cookery indicates the perfectibility of society. The progress of cookery is the progress of civilisation.

In the seventeenth century the ladies of the French aristocracy took up the culinary art as a fashionable cult, which, by the close of that century, had become highly developed among them, as witness the Ladies' Banquet of the accompanying illustration.

Cookery is one of the most excellent of the sciences. It is entitled to this distinction from the measure in which it contributes to the comfort and gratification of man. The records of the other sciences are addressed to the learned, but volumes

on cookery are addressed to the great body of mankind. The majority of men are more concerned about the turning of the spit than the rotation of the earth. Cookery is the most ancient of sciences. Few nations in their origin were so utterly barbarous as to devour their food without some previous preparation.

Man is the one animal who can adapt himself to the changing conditions of life and the vicissitudes of climate. He can exist on every kind of food ; every animal and every plant yield him their produce ; all Nature is under tribute to him. It is in cooking that he is superior to other animals, for by its aid he fits to his wants much foodstuff that would otherwise run to waste. By skilful preparation and skilful cooking man enlarges his resources a thousandfold.

The cooks of the ancients were generally hired for a grand dinner, and they carried their art to the most whimsical perfection.

Such was the extraordinary skill of these artists they were able to serve a whole pig, boiled on one side and roasted on the other. The cook who performed this feat would defy the guests to detect the place where the knife had separated the animal, or how it was contrived to stuff the belly with an olio, composed of thrushes and other birds, slices of the matrices of a sow, the yolks of eggs, the bellies of hens with their soft eggs, flavoured with a rich juice, and minced meats highly spiced.

When the secret of this triumph was revealed, it would appear the animal had been bled to death by a wound under the shoulder, whence, after a copious effusion, the entrails had been extracted. Hanging by its feet, the animal was washed with wine, and then stuffings already prepared were crammed down its throat. Then covering the half of the pig with a paste of barley thickened with

wine and oil, the expert artist placed it in a small oven, where it was gently roasted with all due care. When the skin was browned he boiled the other side, and then, taking off the paste, the pig was served up at once boiled and roasted.

With a vegetable, these marvellous cooks could counterfeit any flesh or fish, both in shape and taste. It is recorded that the King of Bithynia, while on some expedition against the Scythians in the winter, and when a great distance from the sea, conceived a violent longing for an aphy—a small fish, probably an anchovy. His cook cut a turnip into the perfect shape of one, fried it in oil, salted, and so seasoned and disguised it with the powdered grains of black poppies, that his Majesty's taste was exquisitely deceived, and he praised it to his guests as a most excellent fish.

Dionysius describes the perfect cook with no uncertain opinion :—

“To roast some beef, to carve a joint with neatness,
To boil up sauces, and to blow the fire,
Is anybody's task ; he who does this
Is but a seasoner and broth-maker.
A cook is quite another thing. His mind
Must comprehend all facts and circumstances ;
Where is the place, and what the time of supper ;
Who are the guests, and who the entertainer ;
What fish he ought to buy, and where to buy it.”

Artemidorus collected and commented on all the words in use in the kitchens of his time. Timachidas of Rhodes, cook and poet of the highest renown, composed an epepee on the art which he professed, in the midst of the emanations from the stoves and the spit.

Archestratus, a culinary philosopher who flourished about 350 B.C., composed an epic or didactic poem on good eating. His “Gastrology” became the

creed of the epicures, and its pathos appears to have been of that kind which made the readers' "mouths water." He opens his subject thus :—

"I write these precepts for immortal Greece,
That round a table delicately spread,
Or three, or four, may sit in choice repast,
Or five at most. Who otherwise shall dine,
Are like a troop marauding for their prey."

A century later Athenæus wrote his "Banquet of the Learned" in fifteen books; and it consists of an immense mass of anecdotes, extracts from the writings of poets, historians, dramatists, philosophers, orators, and physicians, of facts in natural history, criticisms and discussions on every conceivable subject, especially on gastronomy. Thus he gives in this collection of *Ana* the philosophy or metaphysics of cookery :—

"Know then, the Cook, a dinner that's bespoke
Aspiring to prepare, with prescient zeal
Should know the tastes and humours of the guests."

Which, though the superlative of advice, is quite true; as also is the dictum :—

"All books of cookery, all helps of art,
All critic learning, all commenting notes
Are vain, if void of genius, thou wouldst cook."

The master cook, according to this sage, avoids the common blunder of the vulgar cook, with his confused odours of the *gallimaufry*, and makes "the nostril feel each scent distinct"; he "explores causes," and "guides the mighty whole," and seated apart in his kitchen, issues thus his orders :—

"Leave, leave that ponderous ham,
Keep up the fire, and lively play the flame
Beneath those lobster patties; patient here,
Fix't as a statue, skim, incessant skim.

Steep well this small glosiscus [a large sea fish] in its sauce,
 And boil that sea-dog in a cullender ;
 This eel requires more salt and marjoram ;
 Roast well that piece of kid on either side
 Equal ; that sweetbread boil not over much."

The culinary artist of refinement adapts his repast to his personages :—

"I like to see the faces of my guests,
 To feed them as their age and station claim ;
 My kitchen changes as my guests inspire
 The various spectacle."

Here we may leave the culinary philosophy of the ancients and come nearer home, both in time and space, for the further consideration of our subject.

Of the cook history says little ; of the banquets set forth by his skill before the highest and mightiest of the land, and on the most interesting and eventful occasions, it, on the contrary, furnishes many particulars not unworthy of more detail than our space or our object will here admit of. The *art* of cookery in this country may be dated from the Norman Conquest : our Saxon ancestors appear to have distinguished themselves for the excess rather than for the quality of their food. Whilst the Normans, as William of Malmesbury expressly states, were delicate in the choice of meats and drinks, they seldom exceeded the bounds of temperance, and while living less expensively, lived also with more elegance. John of Salisbury mentions that he was present at a great entertainment where there were served up the choicest luxuries of Babylon and Constantinople, of Palestine and Alexandria, of Tripoli, Syria, and Phœnicia. These delicacies of course could only be obtained at a great expenditure, and must have required cooks to do them justice. Such, no doubt, existed, and

were so highly esteemed that estates were granted them to be held by the tenure of dressing a particular dish. One of the most striking evidences of the magnificence of the feasts of the Norman Court is daily before our eyes in that finest of European halls, the one at Westminster : that hall, we are told by Stow, was built by William Rufus for his dining-room.

What was the condition of the culinary art here in the days of our Plantagenet kings? A very complete answer to this question might be given after a study of that famous medieval work, "The Forme of Cury," which was published to the world in 1390, on the authority of Richard II.'s highly qualified cook-in-chief. Here, however, considerations of space will limit the answer to a few notes and extracts—such as, being fairly typical, will perhaps serve (together with the allusions to this notable authority which appear elsewhere) to convey a very fair notion of the high level to which the science of "cury"—that is, cookery—had attained in England at that time.

First of all, a recipe in "The Forme of Cury" for cabbage soup illustrates the enduring nature of some culinary practices :—

"Caboche in pottage. Take caboche and quarter hem, and seeth hem in gode broth with onyons y-minced and the white of lekes y-slypt and corve [cut] smale, and do thereto safronn and salt and force it with powder douce [allspice]."

Barring the saffron, that pestilent ingredient of medieval cookery, this method differs little from that in use to-day.

Saffron, it is time to explain, is a species of crocus, specially cultivated for medicine and cookery. The stamens of this flower are pulled and dried into flat, square cakes for medicinal purposes. It was for-

merly much esteemed in cookery. The clown in the "Winter's Tale," reckoning up what he is to buy for the sheepshearing feast, mentions "saffron to colour the warden-pies."

Here is a medieval method of cooking rabbits, or "coneyes," which, as it makes a highly-spiced dish of spoon-meat, is quite characteristic of the period :—

"Connynge in gravey.—Take connynges, smite hem in pecys. Parboile hem, and drawe hem with gode broth, with almandes blanchéd and brayed. Do [put] thereinne sugar and powder gynger and boyle it, and the fless therewith. Floer [flour] it with sugar and with powder gynger, and serve forth."

Most of the recipes in "The Forme of Cury" recommend the use of sugar and ginger. There is one for cooking rabbits or kids, called "Egurdouce"—that is, *aigre-doux*, or sour sweet, probably because there is nothing sour in its composition. But there is sugar, as usual, to say nothing of "raysons of corrance" and "gynger of canel" (cinnamon). The flesh is first fried in onions and then boiled in red wine. Even this would be preferable to stewed goose, a dish which would certainly try stomachs inclined to be delicate.

Hotch-potch, or "hoche-pot," was a medieval dish which King Richard's cook prepared with great elaboration; but his "blank-mang" was not the delicate opaque jelly now served under the name of blanc-mange. It was a dish of capons seethed in the usual highly-spiced broth of the period, the recipe for which winds up with this direction :—

"Then messe it forth and flourish [garnish] it with aneys in confyt rede other whyte [aniseed confectioned, red or white] and with almandes fryed in oyle; and serve it forth."

Many of the dishes of "fysse" were highly

elaborated. Among others is found a recipe for making a salmon into a kind of thick soup or purée with almonds, milk, and rice flour. Chysanne was a fish stew scientifically prepared. Lampreys were served in what was then called "galyntyne," a hot preparation very different from the galantine of modern days.

Croustades of a kind were not unknown to the culinary artists of those days, as witness :—

"Daryols.—Take creme of cowe, mylke of almandes. Do thereto ayren [eggs] with sugar, safroun, and salt. Medle it yfere [mix it thoroughly]. Do it in a coffyn of two ynche depe, bake it wel, and serve it forth."

The term "croustade" is preferable to that of coffin, even for the serving forth of funeral baked meats.

The Crusaders, among other importations, had evidently added a sauce to the cuisine of Western Europe; the "Sawse sarzyne" of this ancient cookery book being simply Saracen sauce, just as "Peerey of peson" may be taken as Norman-English for *purée de pois*. And the mention of some of the recipes of "fresh mutton" should not provoke a smile; it should remind us that, winter stall-feeding being then unknown, oxen and sheep were slaughtered in the autumn and salted wholesale for the winter. In the vast kitchens of baronial establishments the use of dried and salted mutton carcasses as impromptu seats was not an unknown thing at Christmas merry-makings.

These few examples will suffice to convey some idea of the achievements of which a *chef de cuisine* was capable in the fourteenth century. The "sotelties" which were his crowning triumph (mentioned on p. 108) showed that he had some pretensions to call himself an artist.

The chef of eminence came in time to be recog-

nised as a gentleman, for the heraldic blazon of a cook, according to Randle Holme, in "The Academy of Armory," is set forth in these terms:—

"He beareth *Gules*, a cook, with a cap, sleeves, and apron, *Argent*; waistcoat and breeches, *Azure*; hose of the second, shoes *Sable*; holding a dish of meat between his hands, *proper*; a dresser fixed to the *dexter* side, *Or*."

A title sometimes given to cooks in older times was *écuyer*, or equerry.

The cook, owing, no doubt, to his office, was considered important enough by Chaucer to be introduced as a leading character into his "Canterbury Tales"; and the text furnishes us, in the banter of the host, with some particulars of this cook's position, name, and other personal matters of interest.

"Many a Jack of Dover hast thou sold
That hath been twies hot and twies cold,
Of many a pilgrim hast thou Christé's curse,
For of thy parsley yet fare they the worse,
That they have eaten in thy stubble-goose.
For in thy shop go'th many a flie loose.
Now tell on, gentle Roger, by thy name," &c.

The pilgrims continue their journey; the tales, now of the broadest humour, now of the deepest pathos, follow in regular succession; but intellectual enjoyments alone are far from satisfactory to the cook. He accordingly applies himself to a much more accustomed, and, to him, more substantial pleasure; what that was the ensuing extracts will show. At the conclusion of the Canon Yeoman's tale, the host, looking back, sees the cook fast asleep upon his horse:—

"Then gan our host to japé and to play;
And saidé, Sirs, what? Dun is in the mire.
Is there ne man for prairie ne for hire
That will awaken our fellów behind?"

A thief him might full lightly rob and bind :
 See how he nappeth, see, for cockés bones,
 As he would fallen from his horse at ones :
 Is that a cook of London ?" &c.

He is awakened, looking " full pale," and excuses himself by saying :—

" There is fall'n on me such heaviness,
 N'ot I not why, that me were lever sleep,
 Than the best gallon wine that is in Cheap."

The host has determined that he shall now tell a tale by way of penance ; but the manciple offers to undertake that task for him, saying :—

" See how he gapeth, lo, this drunken wight,
 As though he would us swallow ánon right."

It is but too true—the cook is drunk ; and at last, vexed by the jibes of the manciple and his own inability to answer him in his present state, " he gan nod fast," and fell from his horse. Then

" There was great shoving bothé to and fro,
 To lift him up, and mochel care and woe."

The humorous host now reminds the manciple that the cook, another day, will be revenged for this. " I mene," he says,

" He speaken will of smallé things,
 As for to pinchen at thy reckonings,
 That were not honest if it came to proof."

The manciple, it must be observed, was an officer who had the care of purchasing victuals for an inn of court ; and there might consequently have been transactions between the cook and the manciple not very creditable to the latter if known. He is frightened, at all events—

" I would not wrathen him, so mote I thrive,"

and, in the end, with admirable judgment, he makes peace by

“A draught of wine, yea, of a ripe grape.”

Drunkenness surely misbecomes the cook more than most men.

The office of the culinary artist is one which has a subtle, if not a dominating, influence on the daily life of those for whom it is his business to cater. He rules the roast, says one proverb; the cook is not to be taught in his own kitchen, says another. That he is sometimes given to rule those whom he is paid to serve would appear to have been felt in the days of the Latin poet Martial, who, twenty centuries ago, wrote: “I prefer that the courses at our banquet should give pleasure to the guests rather than the cooks.”

Dr. William King, who flourished between 1663 and 1712, and gave us the “Art of Cookery,” says that

“’Tis by his cleanliness a cook must please.”

A dirty cook is an abomination. One ancient writer makes contemptuous reference to the “sluttry of the cook.”

That he does not always succeed in pleasing is a fact made evident by the crystallisation of his shortcomings into proverbial form. One old saw, which begins by telling us that God sends meat, completes the postulate by giving an entirely opposite origin for the cooks who are sent to dress the benign gifts of Heaven.

Another, equally well known, has reference to the spoiling of the broth by the officious interference of too many tenders of the seething pot.



THE MIRACLE OF THE SIEVE. BY MOSTAERT.

Showing a finely equipped 16th Century kitchen.

(From a photograph supplied by the Curator of the Royal Museum, Brussels.)

He is not always dexterous with his most familiar tools, or Chaucer would not have written of

“The cook yscalded for all his long ladle.”

In the “Celtic Dragon Myth” the cook appears as a comic character. The grotesque, “cock-eyed, carrotty cook” of this legend flourishes his carving-knife quite valiantly; and when the hero after three days’ desperate fighting vanquishes the dragon and then disappears, as these heroes have a habit of doing, this “lousy scullion” comes forward, pretends to the honour, and claims the reward.

But in former times a yet more distinguishing feature could be attributed to the professional concocter of dishes. “The Forme of Cury” tells us it was compiled “under the assent and avisement of the masters of physick and philosophy that dwelled in the king’s court.”

All the best old cookery-books in the language were written by eminent medical men. Sir Kenelm Digby and Dr. Mayerne in the seventeenth, Dr. Hill and Dr. Hunter in the eighteenth, and Dr. Kitchiner in the nineteenth century have given to the world the best English domestic cookery books of their respective eras.

Dr. Lister, physician to Queen Anne, expressed the opinion: “I do not consider myself as hazarding anything, when I say that no man can be a good physician who has not a competent knowledge of cookery.” As a matter of fact, in the olden time, cookery was looked upon as a branch of medical science. The Latin verb *curare* signifies to dress a dinner, as well as cure a disease. On board ship sailors often dub their cook “doctor.”

There can be no question that a well-arranged dietary has had much to do with increasing the

longevity which our generation enjoys over those of the past.

The wonderful feats—culinary, not medicinal—which the ingenuity and skill of the expert cook has achieved would fill a book.

Charles XII. had a wonderful recipe for cooking a fat hen while upon the march. The fowl was larded, trussed as if for roasting, and stuffed with butter. A piece of hot steel, not red hot, of a size and shape specially designed for the purpose, was inserted into its belly. It was then shut up in a tin box, which was wrapped in a woollen cloth, and strapped on a soldier's back. In a few hours, when the march came to an end, it was found sufficiently cooked.

But this is nothing to what the Tartars are credited with ; these marvellous horsemen are said to be able to cook their meat, while galloping on horseback, by using it as a saddle !

A triumph of cookery was that achieved by the chief cook of Louis XIV., who on the occasion of a grand banquet dressed a pair of his Majesty's old slippers with such exquisite skill that the King and all his courtiers declared it to be the best dish they ever tasted. But no doubt a number of anecdotes like this—and as reliable in their conclusion—could be collected. They but illustrate the point that the most accomplished master of the art is the one who seasons his dishes most cunningly and most elegantly.

It was the same culinary artist who one Good Friday served the king with a dinner, apparently composed of poultry and butcher's meat, but which in reality was nothing but vegetables, prepared, as Lenten dishes should be, *au maigre*.

It is recorded that Vatel, *maître d'hôtel* of the great Condé, committed suicide because the fish had

not arrived in time for a great dinner, at which Louis XIV. was to have been present. Peace be to his ashes, for as the witty author of "The Banquet" writes :—

" . . . The excellent Vatel
Untimely but not unlamented fell,
Friendship embalmed his memory in her tear,
And rank and royalty adorned his bier.
Long shall his premature and tragic fate
The Fasti of the festive board relate."

It is again to the credit of the craft that Wellington's cook on the day of Waterloo stuck to his post, faithful to his duty, incredulous of defeat, though assured by hundreds of cowardly fugitives that the day was lost. A nice sense of honour, it would seem, distinguishes the cook who has arrived at any eminence in his profession.

The favourite cook of George II. was Tom Weston, of whom the other servants were extremely jealous ; and when any dish was found fault with they invariably used to say it was Weston's dressing. The King at last took notice of this, and said it was very extraordinary that every dish he disliked should happen to be of Weston's preparing. " In future," continued the King, " let every dish be marked with the name of the cook that makes it." By this means the King detected their arts, and from that time Weston was reinstated in favour. The custom of marking the royal dishes with the name of the cook prevailed for long afterwards.

Even the great Lord Bacon thought it no shame to bend his mighty intellect to the problems of the kitchen. David Hume, after retiring from public life in 1769, devoted himself to cooking, as " the science to which I addict the remaining years of my life." What calling can boast more honourable names?

The term *cordons bleu* came to be applied to a superior cook in this wise. The blue ribbon was really worn to carry the decoration of the ancient Order of *Le St. Esprit*, the highest order of knighthood in France. The commander de Souvé, le Comte d'Olonne, and some others were wont to meet together in a sort of club which became noted for the well-appointed dinners they had served there. Hence, when any one had dined well, he said, "Bien, c'est un vrai repas de cordons bleu"; and so a superior cook became known as one of the *cordons bleu* type.

One of the latest outcomes of modern progress is the consultant-chef, who may be seen any day of the week in his London chambers, and who for a reasonable fee will describe the use of the chafing-dish, explain the newest labour-saving devices for the kitchen, or undertake to solve any problem of the cuisine. He will draw up a menu for a luncheon or a dinner, and, if necessary, invent a new dish. But his primary function is to impress upon inquirers the importance of a properly balanced menu to the health of the household. With his science, and, above all, his insistence upon hygienic exactitude, he thus brings us back to the ancient association between "cookery and curing."

But with all the mighty minds which have been brought to bear on the subject, how stands the art of cookery to-day with the masses of the English people? Does the English workman's wife compare favourably, say, with the French peasant woman? We trow not.

The first writer to deal with what we now call "cottage cookery" was Tobias Venner, a Somersetshire man, who in 1620 published "*Via Recta ad Vitam Longam*," a work full of practical and sound, homely advice to the lower rural classes; though it

is to be feared, owing to the deficiencies of their education, they were quite unable to profit by it.

And so to this day there is an undue percentage of English women who have not mastered that stumbling-block of the budding cook, the art of cooking a potato. However, Education Committees all over the country are now endeavouring to overtake the neglect of centuries, and to wipe out the reproach that the English lower classes are practically ignorant of cookery—cookery as an integral part of the philosophy of life.

XXI

COOKERY-BOOK DIVERSIONS

Obsolete cookery terms—*Tot fai* or toffey—"Oyle soups" or olla—Fast day fish—Range of dishes in 1464—"Mortes"—"Coulis"—Fifteenth-century garden stuff—Scarcity of milk and butter—Recipes or barbarous "secrets"—Mayern's Archimagirus—London Pie—Medicine and cookery—"The Pearl of Practice" (1656)—Still-room practice—"Water of Life"—Mithridate—Etiquette of table terms—For serving fish—Game and fowl—Pigeon pie extraordinary—"The Accomplished Cook," by Robert May (1671)—A Restoration Christmas dinner—Sir Kenelm Digby's Receipt Book (1671)—Poultry feeding—Flomery—Possets—Pap—"Sassage"—Aristocratic recipes—Meat extract—"The Queen-like Closet," by Hannah Woolly (1681)—"Mrs. Glasse" *alias* Dr. Hill (1746)—Incongruous mixture of dishes—Contempt for French cookery—Hill's authorship disputed—More stillroom practice—Pickling—Flower-petal cakes—Wine-making—Flumery confections—"Florentine"—Other cookery - books—"Cook's Oracle" (1820)—Eccentric Dr. Kitchiner—Alexis Soyer, 1846.

MAN is the only animal that cooks its food. That he is also proud of this accomplishment appears from his extreme fondness for writing about it. From the days of that noble Roman, Apicius, the output of cookery-books has gone steadily on; and entertaining reading many of them afford.

The oldest treatise on the culinary art of this country was written in Latin and highly unintelligible Norman-French by Archbishop Neckham about the close of the thirteenth century.

Of the first great English cookery book, "The Forme of Cury," sufficient has already been said.

"The Noble Boke off Cookery," a MS. in the library of the Earl of Leicester, at Holkham, dating from 1467, enlightens us as to the dishes which were considered dainty in the fifteenth century. But the recipes are written in the Anglo-French of the period, and both the writing and the spelling are so uncertain it requires a vast amount of guessing to affix a meaning to some of the terms employed.

The recipe for bread sauce appears under the heading "saucealiper," which we may accept as "sauce a le pain"; and we seem to recognise "Charlotte" in "Charlet." "Obleys" are evidently the thin wafers or biscuits now called "oblaten," well known as a Carlsbad speciality. But is "votose" a travesty for "tot fait," which is the origin of the schoolboy's "toffy"? Perpend--

"To make votose tak gobettes of mary [marrow] and dates cutt gret, sugur and poudur of guinger, saffron and salt, and mak afoile as ye did befor, and do it out of the pot, and mak another, then tak the for-said stuf and couche thes in almost as brod as the foile, and wet the bredes of the foille aboue and close and bak it essely, and when it is bak cutt it in peces eury pece ij enche square."

The recipe for "oyle soupes" makes a refined dish, but does not contain any oil (the derivation is from the French word *oille*, Spanish *olla*, a pottage made of divers meats and herbs) :—

"Tak and boyll mylk and yolks of eggs and draw them thro a streiner, and cast it into the mylk and heet it, but lett it not boill, and stir it till it be somdele thick, then cast thes to sugur and salt, and cutte whit bred in sopes, and cast the sopes therin, and serue it in manner of potage."

The Holkham "Boke" gives as its first bill of fare that of "a ffeste of King Henry the Fourth to the Heralds and ffrench men when they justed

in Smythefelde," which must have been held before the year 1413. The materials in the way of poultry and game seem to have been abundant, and they hold important places in each of the three courses.

Fish eaten on fast days, when flesh was not allowed, entered sparingly into the meals served on other days, and often was not served at all. Does not Falstaff deplore the "many fish meals" which destroy the manly vigour?

But at the "coronacon off King Henry the ffifte" we read of pike, lamprey, gurnard, trout, roach, shrimps, eels, plaice, conger, bass, mullet, salmon, soles, halybut, sturgeon, tench, flounders, minnows, and porpoise; and with so great a variety of sea and river fish there was surely no lack of nutriment in such a meal.

At the "stallacion" of George Neville (brother of the Kingmaker) as Archbishop of York, in 1469, sixty-two cooks were employed to prepare the feast; and as it was served hot at midday their labours could not have been light, for besides "great beef and mutton," "oxene," "porcele," antelopes, boars' heads, venison, and roe, there were game birds and tame birds of every kind; swans and egrets, ganets and gulls, heron and peacock, pheasants, partridges, plover, woodcock, goodwitts, redshanks, Yarowe helpes, knottes (birds named after King Knut), bittern and curlew, quails, pigeons, chyckens and capons, larks, dotterelles, and martynets. Soups and pottage, sweet dishes and fruits, "peres in ceripe" (pears in syrup) are named, but no vegetables. The term *entremets*, for side dishes, was written "interments." Besides the four hundred tarts, there were served on this occasion five thousand dishes of jelly, four thousand cold custards, and two thousand hot custards. There were a thousand servers or waiters employed, and the

sixty-two cooks had at their command 515 kitchen assistants. Such was the luxury and magnificence of an English prelate.

Among other terms employed in the "Boke" of 1467 are "Cratons"—*cretons*, an old French word for a preparation of scraps of pork or other meat; "mortes"—probably the dish prescribed by Lord Bacon as excellent to nourish those that are weak, and made of brawn of capons, stamped, strained, and mingled with like quantity of almond butter; "acoles"—evidently the same as the "cullice" of cocks, another of Lord Bacon's dishes; in modern cookery-books, known as "coulis," it is the juice that flows from meat and forms the foundation of savoury sauces. The expression "groseille à maquereau" is still used in French to distinguish gooseberries from currants, both of them being "groseilles." It was an old Norman practice to eat green gooseberry sauce with mackerel.

There was not a wide range of garden stuff used at table in the fifteenth century—cabbage, cane beans, peas, parsley, sage, "ysope," "netilles," sorrel, mint, "onyons," leeks, rosemary, and the inevitable saffron. But as if to make up for the lack of green vegetables, the medieval cook was profuse in the use of spices, for very few dishes escaped a liberal sprinkling of ginger, cloves, mace, or "canelle" (cinnamon). Then sugar, honey, and currants ("raissins of corans") were usually mixed in fish and savoury dishes. It is a canon of cookery that there should be a little salt in all sweet dishes, and a little sugar in all savoury dishes. Milk and butter seem to have been so seldom used that we may infer they were very scarce articles. The explanation, perhaps, is that the cows were too ill-fed to yield very little more milk than their calves needed, and there were certainly many months of the year in which no butter

was made. We read once of "May butter"; and there was a "salt butter," which was very ill-made and much over-salted. Or perhaps the recipes came originally from Italy and the South of France, where the climate does not favour the use of cream.

The recipes (or "secrets" as they are termed) given in some old cookery-books are too barbarous to be transcribed. For instance, one may learn from them "how to roast and eat a goose alive, so that it would shriek when being carved, very pleasant to the beholders"; how a live lamprey was to be "fried, boiled, and roasted at the same time"; and "how a living fowl, fluttering in agony, turned the spit" upon which it was roasting.

The recipe for that innocent-looking dish which Chaucer calls "blanc manger" commences in this strain: "Take a capon and cut out the braune of him *alive*, parboyle the braune tyll the flesh come from the boone," &c.

Leaving these ancient culinary atrocities, more comfortable by far is it to learn, from the "Archimagirus Anglo-Gallicus" of Dr. Mayerne, the recipe for that homely dish "London pie," which was this authority's *chef d'œuvre*:—

"Take eight marrow-bones, eighteen sparrows, one pound of potatoes, quarter of a pound of eringoes, two ounces of lettuce stalks, forty chestnuts, half a pound of dates, a peck of oysters, quarter pound of preserved citron, three artichokes, twelve eggs, two sliced lemons, a handful of pickled barberries, quarter ounce of whole pepper, half ounce of sliced nutmeg, half ounce of whole cinnamon, quarter ounce of whole cloves, half ounce of mace, quarter pound of currants. Liquor it, when it is baked, with white wine, butter, and sugar."

Dr. Mayerne had been physician to four kings, Henry IV. of France, James I., Charles I., and Charles II. of England, and he held a well-defined place in medical science. He was a noted *bon vivant*,

yet attained the age of eighty-two ; the jolly physician dying at his own house at Chelsea, in 1655, after having drunk some bad wine at a Strand tavern. He often participated in the hospitalities of the Lord Mayor, and his cookery-book is allowed to be the best of its day, for Sir Theodore Mayerne could dress a dinner as well as he could cure a disease.

Tobias Venner, already mentioned (p. 238), like other writers on culinary subjects, was a physician, and he goes minutely into the alimentary values of food. He held the opinion that any rough food would do for "hinds"—bull beef for ploughmen, if they could get it—but he distinctly thought that the flesh of partridges should not be eaten by "the common sort," because it was likely to "breed in them the asthmatick passion." The worthy doctor was himself a man of refined taste, and designed an æsthetic little meal, of brief but chaste simplicity—it was "a couple of poached eggs, sprinkled with vinegar, seasoned with black pepper and salt, served with bread-and-butter, and completed with a draught of pure claret."

The conjunction of medicine and cookery is exemplified again in an admirable little volume published in 1656. It is in three parts. First, "The Queen's Closet Opened, or The Pearl of Practise ; Accurate Physical and Chirurgical Receipts." Second, "A Queen's Delight, or The Art of Preserving, Conserving, and Candyng, as also a Right Knowledge of Making Perfumes, and Distilling the Most Excellent Waters." Third, "The Compleat Cook, Expertly Prescribing the most ready wayes, whether Italian, Spanish, or French, For Dressing of Flesh and Fish, Ordering of Sauces, or making of Pastry."

The Queen to whom this work was dedicated, or rather for whom it was supposed to be prepared,

was the unfortunate Henrietta Maria. The Preface is signed with the initials W.M., which possibly may stand for Walter Montagu, the Queen's almoner, or for Will Murray, the faithful friend and letter-carrier of her distressed Majesty, and who is mentioned in Evelyn's Diary.

Many and manifold are the medical prescriptions contained in "The Pearl of Practise," and all of them show that our ancestors spared themselves no pains or trouble in the preparation of their home-made remedies. A few examples of the stillroom practice of the period may not be altogether out of place here.

There are cures for smallpox, for commonplace gout, and for a complaint which seemed to be rather prevalent among our ancestors—"a cold stomach." Probably we should call the last named more briefly "a cold." But the "Comfortable Juleb for a Feaver" is the recipe which will give a nearer insight into the nature of this part of the work. This decoction was to be made of "Barley water and White Wine each one pint, Whey one quart, two ounces of Conserves of Barberries, and the Juyces of two limmons and two Oranges."

In the "Bishop of Worcester's curing powder" the principal ingredients seem to be adder-skins and "the black tips of crabs' claws taken when the sun enters Cancer, which is every year on the eleventh day of June."

A better taste of the book's quality may be obtained from the recipe for "The Water of Life," to be given a few drops at a time for fevers, and used in health as a strengthening tonic. It is a curious compound of food and physic.

"Take Balm leaves and stalks, Betony leaves and flowers, Rosemary, red sage, Taragon, Tormentil leaves, Rossolis and Roses, Carnation, Hyssop, Thyme, red strings that grow upon Savory, red Fennel

leaves and root, red Mints, of each a handful; bruise these hearbs and put them in a great earthern pot, and pour on them enough White Wine as wil cover them, stop them close, and let them steep for eight or nine days; then put to it Cinnamon, Ginger, Angelica-seeds, Cloves, and Nutmegs, of each an ounce, a little Saffron, Sugar one pound, Raysins solis stoned one pound, Dates stoned and sliced half a pound, the loyns and legs of an old Coney, a fleshy running Capon, the red flesh of the sinews of a leg of Mutton, four young Chickens, twelve larks, the yolks of twelve Eggs, a Loaf of White bread, cut in sops; and two or three ounces of Mithridate or Treacle, and as much Muscadine as will cover them all. Distil al with a moderate fire, and keep the first and second waters by themselves; and when there comes no more by distilling put more Wine into the pot upon the same stuffe and distil it again, and you shall have another good water."

We can well believe that "this water strengtheneth the Spirit, Brain, Heart, Liver, and stomach," especially as we are to take it "when need is by itself, or with Ale, Beer, or Wine mingled with Sugar."

The confection "mithridate" enters into many of the medicines. It was supposed to have been the cure-all of King Mithridates, and was apparently regarded as a soporific. To compound it forty-five different ingredients were required, among them treacle-mustard, camels' hay, and the bellies of skinks; yet when Pompey found this precious recipe it was simple enough:—

"Pound with care two walnuts, two dried figs, twenty pounds of rice, and a grain of salt."

The natural comment to make upon this is, obviously, that we take it with a grain of salt.

In the second part of the book, among other "incomparable secrets" by "the Most Experienced Persons of the Times," are recipes for two royal perfumes, one by Edward VI. and the other by Queen Elizabeth.

When we come to "The Compleat Cook," the third part of the volume, we are considerably astonished to find the luxury and refinement at the Court of Charles I. which its contents reveal, the recipes for the dressing of fish being particularly dainty. But the most noticeable feature about them, perhaps, is the punctiliousness and nicety of the language employed in speaking of the fish when served at table. To request any one, for instance, to serve or give a helping of salmon was quite wrong. They were politely asked to "chine that salmon," "string that lamprey," "splat that pike," "sauce that tench" (or "that plaice"), "splay that bream," "side that haddock," "tusk that barbel," "culpon that trout," "transom that eel," "tranch that sturgeon," "undertranch that porpoise," "tame that crab," or, as it may be, "barb that lobster." "Here endeth the goodly termes of Kervynge," as a much older book says.

Etiquette and good breeding in the seventeenth century demanded the employment of similar niceties of language when reference had to be made to the carving of game or fowl. Correct manners required one to speak of "rearing a goose," "lifting a swan," "saucing a capon," "spoiling a hen," "trussing a chicken," "unbracing a mallard," "unlacing a coney," "dismembering a heron," "displaying a crane," "disfiguring a peacock," "unjointing a bittern," "untacking a curlew," "allaying a pheasant," "winging a partridge" (or "a quail"), "mincing a plover," and "thighing a pigeon" (or "a woodcock").

As space forbids the quoting of more than one cookery recipe, it shall be that for pigeon-pie, a preference the justification for which appears when we arrive at the end of it:—

“Take your Pigeons (if they be not very young cut them into four quarters) one sweet-bred sliced the long way, that it may be thin and the pieces not too big, one Sheep’s tongue, little more than parboyl’d and the skin pul’d off, and the tongue cut in slices, two or three slices of Veale, as much of mutton, young Chickens (if not little, quarter them) chick Heads, lark or any such like, Pullets, Cox-combs, Oysters, Calves’ Udder, cut in pieces, good Store of Marrow for seasoning; take as much pepper and salt as you think fit to season it slightly, good store of Sweet Marjoram, a little Time, and Lemon-Pill fine sliced; season it well with these spices as the time of the year will afford; put in either of Chestnuts (if you put in Chestnuts they must be either boyl’d or roasted) Goose berries or Gauge; large Mace will do well in this Pye; then take a little peece of veal parboyl’d and slice it very fine, as much marrow as meat stirred amongst it; then take grated bread, as much as a quarter of the meat, four yelks of eggs or more according to the Stuff you make; shread Dates as small as may be, season it with salt, Nutmeg as much as will season it, Sweet Marjoram a pretty store but very small shread, work it up with as much Sweet Creame as will make it up in little puddings, some long, some round, so put as many of them in the Pye as you please; put therein two or three spoonfulls of Gravy of Mutton, or so much strong Mutton Broth, before you put it in the Oven, the bottome of boyl’d Hartichoks, minced Marrow over and in the bottom of the Pye after your Pye is baked; when you put it up, have some five yelk of Eggs minced, and the juyce of two or three Oranges, the meat of one Lemon cut in peeces, a little White and Claret Wine; put this in your Pye, being well mingled, and shake it very well together.”

By this time you may have lost your pigeons, but you have a pie of delicious richness, worthy of Brillat-Savarin, or any other high-priest of the higher gastronomical mysteries.

“The Accomplished Cook,” by Robert May, was published in 1671, in a third and enlarged edition. A cook and the son of a cook, May had served in the best houses, such as those of the Lords Lumley and Montague, the Countess of Kent, Lady Englefield (of Sholeby, in Leicestershire, from whose place he dates), and Lady Dormer, his earliest patron. At the Dormers’ his father had been chef, the assistants, including himself, being five in number.

"Such noble houses were then kept—the glory of that and shame of this present age. Then were those golden days (the reign of James I.) wherein were practised the triumphs and trophies of cookery ; then was hospitality esteemed, neighbourhood preserved, the poor cherished, and God honoured ; then was religion less talked on and more practised ; then did men strive to be good rather than to seem so."

This practical exponent of the art of cookery opens his book with a few Bills of Fare. That for a Christmas Day dinner is no doubt characteristic of the Restoration period. The repast was to begin with oysters. Next came a collar of brawn ; after that stewed broth of mutton marrow-bones ; then a grand sallet (salad), to be followed by a pottage of caponets.

Either this pottage or the mutton broth may have been that old national dish of which the plum-pudding is a solid development. Plum-broth or plum-porridge, or plum-pottage as it was indifferently called, was served at the commencement of the Christmas dinner ; and May, who is evidently a Royalist, would not willingly have shown disrespect to a venerable institution which had been banned by the Roundheads. Either, therefore, he counted the plum-broth so much a matter of course as not to be worth mentioning, or one of the soups above named must have been identical with it. There were many ways of making plum-pottage, and in the *Tatler*, 1710, Addison observes that "no man of the most rigid virtue gives offence by an excess in plum-pudding or plum-porridge, because they are the first parts of the dinner."

The plainest recipe in the book for mutton broth includes saffron and raisins.

Presently come the sirloin of beef and the mince-pies, sweetbreads, a venison pastry, and custards—one described as a custard without eggs.

There are two courses, of twenty-one dishes in each course, but, unfortunately, we are not told for how many persons this meal is prepared.

The second course opened with oranges and lemons, refreshed with which the guests were expected to tackle a lamb or kid, two couple of rabbits (one larded), and a "pig souced, with tongues." A pig was "souced" by boiling it in wine and water, and destroying his flavour with the ubiquitous nutmeg. Justice having been done to the pig, there were ducks, pheasants, and more partridges (the half of each dish larded), a swan pie, another made dish, and Bolonia sausages with anchovies, mushrooms, caviare, and pickled oysters. The flagging appetite having been roused by these *hors-d'œuvres*, six teal were to be set on the table, a gammon of Westphalia bacon, ten plovers, and a quince pie or a warden pie. It may be mentioned that in Charles II.'s time the words "tart" and "pie" seem to have been used indifferently; one reads of "marrow tarts" and "partridge tarts."

There now remained to be disposed of six woodcocks, "a standing tart in puff paste, preserved fruits, pippins," &c., a dish of larks, six dried neats' tongues, sturgeon, powdered (*i.e.*, salted) geese, and, lastly, jellies. Surely a bounteous Christmas dinner—if one's stomach were of sufficient strength and capacity!

The suffering of our ancestors in the messes they had to eat and drink is an oft-told tale which is told nowhere more quaintly than in "The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelm Digby, Kt., Opened." This book was "published by his son's consent" in the year 1671, a few years after his death, and we are told in the Preface that "there needs no Rhetoricating Floscules to set it off." The volume practically consists of Sir Kenelm's private recipe-

book, and is full of learned disquisitions on the drinks and dishes which then found favour with English palates—"a sufficiency of solids as well as liquids for the sating the curiosities of each, or the nicest Palate."

Advocates of the simple life will be horrified to read how "to fatten young chickens in a wonderful degree." Part of this runs: "Their drink must be onely Milk, in another little trough by a meat-trough. Let a candle (fitly disposed) stand by them all night; for, seeing their meat, they will eat it all night long." Another poultry-fattening recipe advises: "Let them have water or strong Ale to drink. They will be very drunk and sleep; then eat again."

It was Sir Kenelm's deliberate opinion that flomery was a food suited to the adult and philosopher, notwithstanding that his contemporary, Locke, had practically relegated it to the dietary of children. To make wheaten flomery we are instructed to soak best wheat bran in water for three or four days, "strain out the milky water from it, and boil it up to a gelly," season it with sugar and orange-flower water, and let it stand until it is cold. It should be eaten "with white or Rhenish wine, or Cream, or Milk, or Ale."

Those who would proceed to a greater luxury might indulge in Flomery Caudle. This "pleasant and wholesome caudle" was made by mixing ale and wine together, and putting into the mixture a few spoonfuls of cold flomery. After stirring it all up we are gravely informed that there will be found remaining in the caudle some lumps of the congealed flomery which are not ungrateful.

Then there was Sack Posset, into the composition of which entered, of course, sack—whether this was sherry, or a white wine, or a mixture (as some anti-

quaries suppose) of sherry, cider, and sugar. Sack Posset, according to Sir Kenelm, was a mixture of half a pint of sack, two quarts of cream, the yolks of ten eggs, three-quarters of a pound of sugar, spices, and "amber-greece." It was to be poured "from a height"—after the manner of serving a cocktail—and might be taken either hot or cold.

Another remarkable mess was Pap, which appears, from the particularly careful recipe he gives, to have been a favourite food with Sir Kenelm. There were several sorts, and here is his method of preparing oatmeal pap. A little oatmeal was boiled in milk, and then strained. Some butter and yolk of egg were beaten up with it, and the whole was then flavoured with orange-flower water and amber-gris.

Among the solids a recipe for an "excellent pudding" is given. We are to take some tripe and cut it into thin shreds, some pork treated in the same manner, and "mingle them together." Salt, pepper, aniseed, and coriander-seeds must be added. Then "make a Liaison with a little Milk and yoke of eggs," and after thoroughly blending the whole together, make an enormous "sassage" of it.

A distinguishing feature of this book is the number of aristocratic friends quoted as authorities for varying the forms of the recipes given. For instance, the accomplished knight gives quite a hundred methods of preparing mead or metheglin, the well-known fermented drink made from honey, including the "white metheglin of My Lady Hungerford, which is greatly praised," and the special brew of Sir Thomas Gower, which is a "metheglin for health." The Countess of Bullingbrook and my Lady Morrice have each their own way of preparing the beverage, and Sir William Paxton has two methods. Sir Baynam Throckmorton always put "amber-greece"

into his, while Sir John Fortescue cleared his with white of egg, and Lord Herbert actually added the egg-shells. The Countess of Dorset put in "Maiden-hair" and "Roman worm-wood," and the Muscovian Ambassador's steward flavoured his master's metheglin with aniseed—and so on with the remarkable multiformity of this beverage which apparently was so popular in the higher circles. Sir Kenelm's book is not without interest as a social document; the writer had not only a passion for cookery, which was a part of his philosophy, but he was a courtier, a poet, and a Fellow of the Royal Society.

The Queen Mother, as we learn from her faithful Chancellor, used to take a very nourishing meat-juice, called "Pressis Nourissant," instead of supper. The method of preparing this early form of meat extract is carefully given. Barely half-roast a leg of mutton, a piece of veal, and a capon; then "squeeze all their juyce in a press with screws"; add the juice of an orange, and slightly warm.

Sir Kenelm's little book ends with a very convenient Table of Contents, from which many other interesting items of information may be gleaned; as the many ways of treating quinces, which was quite a popular fruit in olden times, and the best way of cooking "Poor John," the coarsest and cheapest kind of salted dried fish then in use."

"It is a curious old world we get glimpses of," says Miss Macdonnell, the latest editor of this interesting old book, "at once barbarous, simple, and extravagant, when great ladies were expected to see to the milking of the cows as closely as Joan Cromwell supervised her milch-kine in St. James's Park, and to the cleanliness of their servants' arms and hands, and when huntsmen rode at the bidding of the cook."

"The Queen-like Closet, or Rich Cabinet," written

by Hannah Woolly, appeared in 1681, a small duodecimo, priced at sixpence. It was an abstract of recipes in cookery, confectionery, cosmetics, needlework, "morality," and other matters directly affecting womankind in the exercise of her housecraft and other homely duties. The culinary recipes have nothing remarkable in them except the costliness of carrying them into effect. Everything—to the meanest of meats—is sopped in claret, steeped in claret, basted with claret, as if claret were as cheap as water. It may be recalled that Bacon looks upon this wine almost as if it were ditchwater, for he recommends the opening of a turf or two in the garden walks, and pouring into each a bottle of claret "to recreate the sense of smelling, being no less grateful than beneficial."

Before the close of the eighteenth century a goodly number of books on the subject had appeared, the authors generally sheltering themselves behind the appellation of "A Lady," although Dr. Johnson had declared that no woman could write a cookery-book, and threatened to write one himself. The anonymity of the "lady" who, in 1748, taught the world how "to roast a pound of butter" has saved her name from being immortalised, as it deserved to be.

Whoever the writers were, they generally managed while teaching the art of cookery, to add a number of miscellaneous observations on life and conduct, such as would be likely to prove useful to a girl whose education had been confined to the book-learning of the schoolroom. No doubt such books did prove serviceable to our great-great-grandmothers, whose mode of life was so different from that of the present-day girl.

It is not generally known that the celebrated cookery-book which bears the mythical name "Hannah Glasse" was really written by Dr. Hill,

who was one of the most voluminous hack writers of the eighteenth century. It was of this worthy, when he had failed as a dramatic author, that Garrick uttered the epigram :—

“For physic and farces, his equal there scarce is,
His farces are physic, his physic a farce is.”

Mrs. Glasse’s “Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy” appeared in 1746, but it was written, as Dilly, the publisher, told Dr. Johnson, by Dr. Hill. “Hannah Glasse” was as much a myth as was Sairey Gamp’s “Mrs. Harris.” Nor are the words “first catch your hare,” generally attributed to “Mrs. Glasse,” to be found in “The Art of Cookery.” The nearest words are “take your hare when it is cased”—that is, skinned.

In a rival cookery-book, however, which professes to correct a thousand errors of “Mrs. Glasse,” the author speaks of a fresh codfish as one “hot out of the sea.” On the other hand, her recipes for “Pigeons in Pimlico,” “How to make a Westminster Fool,” and “To dress Flat-fish” were considered admirable in their day.

A bill of fare, “after the most modern fashion” of 1746, was a curious jumble of rabbits and cherry-tarts, lobsters and greengages, served side by side in the most remarkable manner. Reading through these quaintly-written pages, we wonder : Did our forefathers really enjoy the pleasures of the table in this indiscriminate fashion, turning lightly from the orange-pudding to the lobster-soup ; toying with the “ragoo of fat livers” after trifling with the ice-cream ; and revelling in the “nice derangement” of the courses where green goose and apricot-tart with custards appeared at the same time?

With mock humility the author writes : “If I have not wrote in the high-polite style I hope I

shall be forgiven, for my Intention is to instruct the lower sort and I must treat them in their own way. But the great cooks have such a high way of expressing themselves, that the poor girls are often at a loss."

In the Preface the writer demolishes all "those French gentry who pretend to be better cooks than Britons may be made by taking pains." With commendable vigour an attack is made upon the heresy that plain English dishes taste any the better for being called by French names.

Housekeeping was the serious business of life to the discreet matrons who drew their inspiration from the worthy "Mrs. Glasse" and her compeers.

Notwithstanding the positiveness of the Johnsonian theory as to the identity of "Mrs. Glasse," it is only right to recall that in 1858 a contributor to *Notes and Queries* gave an entirely different account of the disputed authorship. He writes that he has in his possession a copy of "The Art of Cookery made Plain and Easy, &c., by a Lady, the 4th edition, &c., 1751 : London, printed for the Author, and sold at the Blue-coat Boy, near the Royal Exchange ; at Mrs. Ashburn's China-shop, the Corner of Fleet Ditch ; at the Leg and Dial, in Fleet Street, &c., &c." Attached is the warning :—

"This BOOK is published with His MAJESTY'S Royal Licence : and whoever prints it, or any Part of it, will be prosecuted."

Opposite the title (continues this contributor) is a copper-plate, surmounted by the arms of the Prince of Wales ; and the following inscription, which will at once inform us who Mrs. Glasse was :—

"Hannah Glasse, Habit Maker to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden. Makes and Sells all Sorts of Riding Habits, Josephs, Great-Coats, Horsemen's Coats, Russia Coats, Hussar Coats, Bedgowns, Night Gowns,

and Robe de Chambers, Widows Weeds, Sultains, Sultans, and Cantouches, after the neatest manner. Likewise Parliament, Judges, and Councillors Robes, Italian Robes, Cossokoons, Capuchins, Newmarket Cloaks, Long Cloaks, Short Do., Quilted Coats, Hoop Petticoats, Under Coats. All Sorts of Fringes and Laces as Cheap as from the Makers. Bonnetts, Hatts, Short Hoods and Caps of all Sorts. Plain Sattins, Sasnetts and Persians. All Sorts of Childbed Linning, Cradles, Baskets, and Robes. Also Stuffs, Camblets, Calimancoes, and Worsted Damasks, Norwich Crapes and Bum-basins, Scarlet Cloaths, Duffel; and Frizes, Dimitys, New Market Hunting Caps, &c. Likewise all sorts of Masquerade Dresses."

Here is the evidence in this old literary controversy, and the reader has the agreeable choice between an interesting abstraction and an advertising habit-maker.

The lady students of the old-time cookery-books could go into their own gardens and gather the faggot of sweet herbs which was to impart flavour and fragrance to the "ragoos" and savouries; or the marigolds which poor Charles Lamb hated so much when they floated on his mess of Charter House School pottage. Our great-great-grandmothers, indeed, spent a considerable part of their lives culling simples, gathering fruits, expressing juices, and spying out things to pickle. And it all had to be done to method. "Gather your currants while the sun is hot upon them," said the monitor of the cookery-book; some leaves were to be picked in the dry and some in the cool; by the inviolable rules of the stillroom there was nothing to be done haphazard.

The month of May was regarded as the proper time to distil herbs, which were then at their greatest perfection.

Our domesticated progenitresses pickled parsley green to cheat grim winter of some of its deprivations; they pickled nasturtium seeds, or else the seeds of elder while they were green, to use as a

substitute for capers ; they pickled radish-pods, horse-radish, young artichokes, samphire, and even marigolds.

Having pickled every green shoot, pod, and seed they could adapt to their purpose, they began to do the same by plums, apricots, peaches, currants, and grapes—when they set about making jams no fruit escaped them, and sometimes not the vegetables.

When they made cakes it was the same. They could make tarts with sorrel. Parsnips and raspberries were made into cakes ; red beetroot, potatoes, and oranges were converted into biscuits. The old recipe for violet cakes is worth quoting :—

“Take the finest violets you can get, pick off the leaves, beat the violets fine in a mortar with the juice of a lemon, beat and sift twice their weight of double-refined sugar, pour your sugar and violets into a silver saucepan or tankard, set it over a slow fire, keep stirring it gently until all your sugar is dissolved ; if you let it boil it will discolour your violets ; drop them in china plates ; when you take them off put them in a box, with paper between every layer.”

And very charming and ethereal the result must have been.

Our great-great-grandmothers were all women who had “shaken hands with a saucepan.” With them wine-making was a recognised branch of female industry. They could make it from dandelions, elderberries, cowslips, rhubarb, currants, parsnips, or from almost anything they chose—these models of domesticity produced, when put to it, sycamore, birch, walnut, blackberry, and balm wines.

“In her very style of looking
There was cognisance of cooking !
From her very dress were peeping
Indications of house-keeping.”

The housewife of the period was as immersed in domesticity as were the herbs and flowers she drowned in teas and decoctions.

Again, these dainty housewives of a bygone generation introduced poetical ideas into their culinary art ; there was often a play of fancy about some of their dishes. In turning over the pages of one of their favourite cookery-books, one may find directions how to spin gold and silver webs for dessert, how to make an obelisk or a Chinese temple in sweetstuff, or how to build a hen's nest with strips of lemon for straw, and holding eggs filled with flummery. There is a high-flown recipe for "Moon and Stars in Jelly," and a finer flight of the imagination is "Solomon's Temple in Flummery."

In solids and savouries the fancy also played just as lightly. We learn how "To make a Porcupine of a Breast of Veal," "To Barbecue a Pig," and even to bombard veal. But when we read "How to Florendine a Hare," and "To make a Solomon Gundy," we suspect we have struck a bad spelling of "Florentine" and "Salmagundi."

How vividly all this recalls sweet memories of the old-world gardens we have seen, some few of which still exist in out-of-the-way places, with their basil, hyssop, rue, burnet, balm, sorrel, tansy, fennel, and rosemary ; with pot-herbs and small saladings ; with all that the garden adjunct to the stillroom produced "a-purpose." But where are now the accomplished housewives who know their virtues and how to make use of them? And are our tastes as refined and delicate nowadays when mint, sage, and parsley almost exhaust our garden flavourings, and borage gives way to cucumber in claret cup?

Other cookery-books of renown are those of Hunter, Raffald, Rundell, and Kitchiner. Also worthy to be placed on the same shelf was "The Cook and Housewife's Manual" of Mistress Meg Dods, hostess of the Cleikum Inn, St. Ronans, which was published in 1826. The real author of the book

is believed to be Mrs. Johnston, author of many excellent tales and novels. "Timothy Tickler" relates how he, with a dozen others, entered a Haggis sweepstakes, and that his Haggis ran second to that of Mrs. Meg Dods.

Dr. Kitchiner was an eccentric who practised what he taught, and had ample means for the purpose. He inherited £70,000 from his father, which was more than sufficient to enable him to work out his ideal of life. He wrote several other pleasant works besides the "Cook's Oracle," which is full of common-sense practice; one of them was a volume of National Songs, published for the coronation of George IV. in 1820.

He was an epicure, an experimenter in cookery, and had a nice taste in the selection of viands, yet was himself abstemious withal. His dinners were always cooked according to his own method, and he gave a *conversazione* every Tuesday evening. Over his drawing-room chimney was a placard bearing the notice, "Come at seven, go at eleven." George Colman, the actor, once being one of his guests, slyly inserted the word "it" after the word "go." All the same, no deviation was allowed from the doctor's usual practice—on the stroke of eleven hats, coats, and umbrellas were brought in, and a hearty "Good-night" sped the departing guests. The form of invitation issued on these occasions ran in this wise:—

"DEAR SIR,—The honour of your company is requested to dine with the Committee of Taste, on Wednesday next, the 10th inst.

The specimens will be placed on the table at five o'clock precisely, when the business of the day will immediately commence.

"I have the honour to be

"Your most obedient servant

"W. KITCHINER (*Sec.*)!

"August 25, 1825,

"43, Warren Street, Fitzroy Square."

Appended was a paper of the "business" :—

"At the last general meeting it was unanimously resolved that an invitation to ETA BETA PI must be answered in writing within 24 hours, &c.

"Therefore to ensure the punctual attendance of those illustrious gastrophilists who are invited to join this high tribunal of taste— It was irrevocably resolved, That the janitor be ordered not to admit any visitor, of whatever eminence of appetite, after the hour at which the secretary shall have announced that the specimens are ready, &c.

"By Order of the Committee."

And so joking and hospitality went ever hand in hand with this benevolent, good-humoured, and whimsical old doctor.

As was to be expected, if Dr. Kitchiner would devote the profundity of his doctor's learning to the alchemy of the kitchen, he could scarcely hope to escape the punning pen of Tom Hood, who implored the Muses to—

"Teach my burning soul to speak
With a bubble and a squeak!
Of Dr. Kitchiner I fain would sing
Till pots and pans and mighty kettles ring!
O culinary sage
(I do not mean the herb in use
That always goes along with goose)
How have I feasted on thy page!"

French influence was again brought to bear on English cuisine when Louise Eustache Ude, formerly cook to the unfortunate Louis XVI., became chef to the Earl of Sefton, and wrote "The French Cook."

Notwithstanding a plethora of cookery-books, cookery as an art, with all its ancient splendour of design, almost disappeared from English homes in the long and dreary period during which it was the sole repertory of the sex that was told to be good,

whoever might be clever. No pious opinion was more universally held than that a kitchen without a female cook was as a garden without a flower, and that the intrusion of the male cook within this province was an outrageous usurpation of one of the most precious rights of woman. And then, at last, appeared the male cook who was the Napoleon of his art—Alexis Soyer, greatest of chefs, and a culinary reformer whose newer practice all men upheld, whose sovereign authority no man could question.

In 1846 Soyer published "The Gastronomic Regenerator," a marvellous cookery-book in which the eagle eye of that great commander of kitchens overlooked nothing; he showed his mastery of materials and weapons in everything; he was matchless in his *hors d'œuvres*, unassailable in his removes, impregnable in his *pièces de résistance*, unconquerable with his flanks.

The advent of Soyer marked a new era; the old rule-of-thumb in the kitchen was passing; a revival in the art of English cookery had set in.

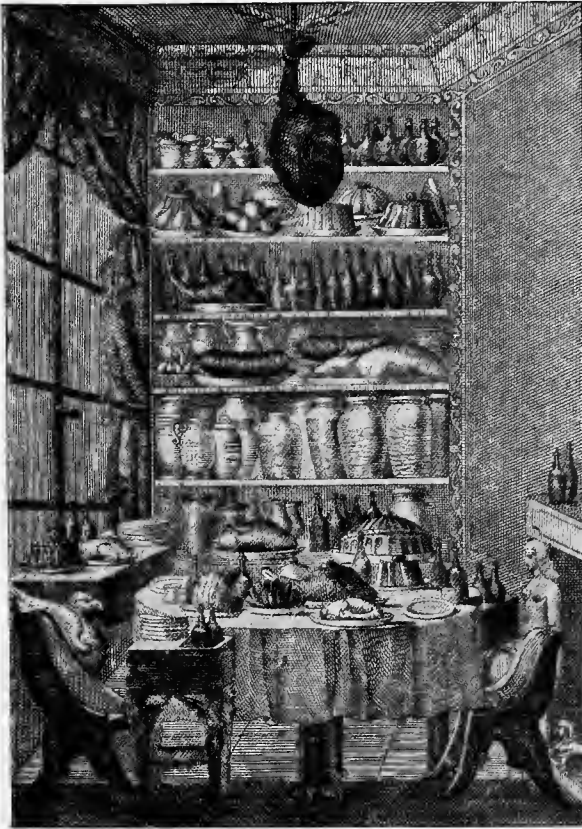
XXII

EPICURES

“Gourmet” and “gourmand”—Philosophy of Epicurus—Abstemiousness not gormandising—“Sir Epicure”—An erroneous conception—Surfeit—Its penalties—The Divine Hungerer—And the devil as host—The gourmand delineated by the dramatist—Archestratus—Scoured the world for new luxuries—Dishes of singing birds—Luxurious snail cultivation—Apicius—His prodigality—A cloistered Emperor’s indulgence—Louis VIII.’s glorious dish fatally surfeits a courtier—Louis XV.—Inventor of *tables volantes*—The English Heliogabalus—“Almanach des Gourmands”—Amphitryon—Brillat-Savarin—“The Philosophy of Taste”—Rev. Sydney Smith—Corrected by George Augustus Sala—Timothy Tickler sauce—Scott as a gourmet—Decline of French gastronomy—Gastronomical proprieties—Fads and fastidiousness—Invention of the sandwich.

THE terms “gourmet” and “gourmand” are very generally confused, though they ought not to be, their respective meanings being so very different. “Gourmet” signifies, in French, a judge of wine, and “gourmand” a glutton, or, more mildly, a gastronomist. But both words are now commonly used to designate a gastronomist, “one who lives well.”

The correct definition of an “epicure” is one who, however humble his fare, will have it of the best of its kind. It is really wrong to apply the term “epicure” to one whose chief pleasure is a voluptuous gratification of the appetite. Rousseau was only re-echoing the maxim of Epicurus when



THE GOURMAND'S LIBRARY.

French, Early 19th Century.

From "Almanach des Gourmands."

(Copy kindly lent by Frank Schloesser, Esq.)

he said, "Abstaining, so as really to enjoy, is epicurism."

Epicurus, the philosopher of Gargettus, was less addicted to mensal than to mental converse; his disciples were deservedly praised by Cicero, Quintilian, and other competent authorities, as a fraternity of love, as a goodly fellowship of moral excellence and superlative wisdom. He inculcated the strictest command of the passions.

The fat swine of Epicurus' sty, with whom and at whom and his dainty friend Catus the kitchener, Horace discusses the mensal tablets of the "Gormandiser's Almanac," are wrong in calling themselves disciples of the abstemious Gargetian, who in his "trim gardens took delight."

The Gargetian was not "the damned Epicurean rascal" whom Shakespeare objurgates; nor were his followers the beastly swine satirised by the delicate Venusian. As a matter of fact Horace was himself a true Epicurean. Admittedly the poet was addicted to luxurious living, was fat, and even troubled with a corpulent belly; but he was Epicurean in the sense that he was a Quietist, professing a philosophy of "dispassion" for the enjoyment of peace of conscience and a tranquil mind. Horace was no vulgar gormandiser.

As an opprobrious term "Epicurean" among the Jews signified an infidel or unbeliever.

Ben Jonson, in his comedy entitled "The Alchemist," has a character, a worldly sensualist, whom he dubs Sir Epicure Mammon. He is represented as being so fastidious that he leaves such fare as pheasants, calvered salmon, knottes, good-wits, and lampreys to his footboy; his exquisite taste directing his own efforts to such dainties as cockles boiled in silver shells, shrimps swimming in butter of dolphins' milk, carp tongues, camels'

heels, barbels' beards, and boiled dormice. Calvered salmon, it may be explained, was fresh salmon cooked in a specially rich manner, while knottes were little birds which, properly cooked, made delicious eating.

It is thus Abraham Cowley sings "the epicure" :—

" Fill the bowl with rosy wine,
 Around our temples roses twine,
 And let us cheerfully awhile,
 Like the wine and roses, smile.
 Crowned with roses, we contemn
 Gyges' wealthy diadem.
 To-day is ours ; what do we fear ?
 Let's treat it kindly, that it may
 Wish at least with us to stay.
 Let's banish business, banish sorrow ;
 To the gods belongs to-morrow."

This is the vulgar conception—and a vulgar error. Epicurus, the founder of the last philosophic sect in Athens, was really an apostle of temperance, with his barley-cake and water. His was a spare diet, on which no one was likely to over-eat himself or to get fat.

It was an aphorism of Hippocrates that fat animals—man and beast—die early. "Surfeit slays more than hunger" is another aphorism in the philosophy of dietetics.

Dante displayed his spirit of saturnine malignity and sarcasm by figuring, in his "Purgatorio," the gourmets and gourmands of his time as miserably lean and skinny apparitions.

The severest satire on the surfeits of the full table is the banquet which Satan, in "Paradise Regained," provides for the temptation of the Divine Hungerer in the wilderness :—

" A table richly spread in regal mode
 With dishes piled, and meats of noblest sort
 And savour ; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,

In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
 Gris-amber-steamed; all fish from sea or shore,
 Freshet or purling brook, for which was drained
 Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast."

As an able critic has rightly said, this visionary feast of the poet was a temptation fitter for Helio-gabalus than the plain hunger of the Guest, for whose simple wants the cook-fiend would in vain conjure up his artillery of sauces. But there's the satire—'tis the devil that plays the host.

The "gourmand" has been delineated for us by Beaumont and Fletcher (or rather John Fletcher) in the play of "The Woman Hater" (1607) :—

"'Tis an excellent thing to be a prince; he is
 Served with such admirable variety of fare,
 Such innumerable choice of delicates;
 His tables are full fraught with most nourishing food,
 And his cupboards heavy laden with rich wines;
 His court is still fill'd with most pleasing varieties;
 In the summer his palace is full of green geese,
 And in winter it swarmeth woodcocks.
 Oh, thou goddess of plenty;
 Fill me this day with some rare delicates,
 And I will every year most constantly,
 As this day, celebrate a sumptuous feast
 (If thou wilt send me victuals) in thine honour!
 And to it shall be bidden, for thy sake,
 Ev'n all the valiant stomachs in the court;
 All short-cloak'd knights, and all cross-garter'd gentlemen;
 All pump and pantofle, foot-cloth riders;
 With all the swarming generation
 Of long stocks, short pain'd hose, and huge stuff'd doublets."

Whatever the correct definitions of "epicure," "gourmet," and "gourmand" may be, the terms have come to be used interchangeably to designate the man who is addicted to good eating and drinking.

In "Anthony and Cleopatra" Shakespeare phrases it :—

"Epicurean cooks
 Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite."

To learn the foibles of this class of men it will be best to go to real characters. Archestratus, in his culinary masterpiece, acknowledges there are some things for the summer, and some dishes for the winter, and though we cannot have them all at the same time, there is at least nothing to prevent our talking about them at all times. This great genius travelled far over land and sea that he might critically examine things for himself, with a view to discovering new table luxuries and improving others. He indicates the places for peculiar edibles, for exquisite potables, and promulgates his precepts with the zeal of a sublime legislator.

The Roman search for rare and costly dainties with which to tickle the palate led them to such extravagant dishes as the tongues of nightingales, the brains of peacocks, and the roes of the most delicious small fishes. We read of one luxurious Roman who had a dish prepared which cost £422, and consisted of a variety of singing and talking birds, each of which was valued at £25.

Snails were in great esteem with the Romans. Fulvius Hilpinus, not long before the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey, made in his garden several enclosures for the feeding of snails, keeping every species by itself ; there might be seen the white snails of Reate, the grey and great snails of Illyricum, the fruitful snails of Africa, and the Solitan snails, most famous and excellent of all. None of them were allowed to feed upon the shrubs and plants, but were given a kind of pap, made of sweet wine, honey, and flour, by which they were fed so fat, and became so wholesome and delicious, that they were greatly sought after, and as we may read, sold for eighty quadrants a dishful.

The favourite dish of Æsop, the actor, was composed of the tongues of such birds as had the faculty

of imitating the human voice. Pollio, to give his lampreys a more exquisite flavour, fattened them upon human flesh ; but the most famous of the Roman gourmands was Apicus, who reduced eating to a system, and delivered lectures on the various modes of pleasing the pampered taste. A Roman cookery-book purporting to have been compiled by Apicius has been handed down to the present day. It is doubtful whether it really was written by the renowned belly-god—it may possibly have been issued under the prestige of his great name.

Apicius poured into his stomach an immense fortune. He usually resided at Minturna, a town in Campania, where he ate shrimps at a high price ; these were so large, that those of Smyrna, and the prawns of Alexandria, could not be compared with the shrimps of Minturna. However, the luckless epicure was informed that the shrimps of Africa were more monstrous. Forthwith he embarked on a voyage to find these appetising dainties. He braved storms and encountered many dangers in the quest, only to be disappointed and to hurry back to the shrimps of his own Minturna.

Having expended immense treasures on the invention of new dishes, Apicius at last killed himself because his fortune was insufficient to carry out all the magnificent conceptions he had formed.

Pliny calls this Apicius the *barathrum*, the abyss, of all youth. At length so many subjects of taste, so many provocatives of luxury, so many varieties of dainties, were invented by these Apicians, that it was thought requisite to restrain the luxury of the kitchen. Hence all those ancient sumptuary laws which bridled people's mouths and sought to prevent prodigality at feasts.

The epicurean habits of the Emperor Charles V., during the "cloister life" to which he retired, have

been fully described for us by Sir W. Stirling-Maxwell. It was his indulgence at table which inflamed his gout. Roger Ascham was astounded to see the Emperor's progress through "sod beef, roast mutton, baked hare," after which "he fed well off a capon" washed down with a quart of Rhenish. Eating was his only physical gratification, and he could not resist it. The supply of his table was the main subject of his correspondence with the Secretary of State.

The weekly courier between Valladolid and Lisbon was ordered to change his route every Thursday that he might bring a provision of eels and other rich fish for the royal fast on Friday.

There was a constant demand for anchovies, tunny, and other potted fish, and sometimes a complaint that the trouts of the country were too small; the olives, on the other hand, were too large, and the Emperor wished, instead, for olives of Perejon. One day the Secretary of State was asked for some partridges from Gama, a place from which the Emperor remembers that the Count of Orsono once sent him, into Flanders, some of the best partridges in the world. Another day sausages were wanted "of the kind which the Queen Juana, now in glory, used to pride herself in making, in the Flemish fashion at Tordesillas," and for the recipe for which the Secretary was referred to the Marquess of Denia. Both orders were punctually executed. The sausages, although sent to a land supreme in that manufacture, gave great satisfaction. Of the partridges, the Emperor said that they used to be better, ordering, however, the remainder to be pickled. The Emperor's weakness being generally known or soon discovered, dainties of all kinds were sent to him as presents. Mutton, pork, and game were the provisions most easily obtained at Xarandilla, but they

were dear. The bread was indifferent, and nothing was good and abundant but chestnuts, the staple food of the people. But in a very few days the castle larder wanted for nothing. One day the Count of Oropesa sent an offering of game ; another day a pair of fat calves arrived from the Archbishop of Zaragoza ; the Archbishop of Toledo and the Duchess of Frias were constant and magnificent in their gifts of venison, fruit, and preserves ; and supplies of all kinds came at regular intervals from Seville and from Portugal. Luis Quixada, who knew the Emperor's habits and constitution well, beheld with dismay these long trains of mules laden, as it were, with gout and bile.

To France, land of culinary inventiveness, we should naturally look for examples of epicureanism. But we have to look high. The coarse and meagre fare of the common people in pre-Revolution days, with the burden of the Gabelle and other iniquitous imposts, is not likely to yield us any.

Louis VIII. invented a dish called *truffes à la purée d'ortolans*. The happy few who tasted this dish, as concocted by the royal hand of Louis himself, described it as the very perfection of the culinary art. The Duc d'Escars was sent for one day by his royal master for the purpose of assisting in the preparation of a glorious dish of this delicacy, and their joint efforts being more than usually successful, the happy friends sat down to *truffes à la purée d'ortolans* for ten, the whole of which they caused to disappear between them, and then each retired to rest, triumphing in the success of their happy toils. In the middle of the night, however, the Duc d'Escars suddenly awoke, and found himself alarmingly indisposed. He rang the bells of his apartment, when his servant came in, and his physicians were sent for ; but they were

of no avail, for he was dying of a surfeit. In his last moments he caused some of his attendants to go and inquire whether his Majesty were not suffering in a similar manner with himself, but they found him sleeping soundly and quietly. In the morning, when the King was informed of the sad catastrophe to his faithful friend and servant, he exclaimed, "Ah ! I told him I had the better digestion of the two."

Louis XV., himself a practical cook of singular proficiency, continued to foster the development of the school which his predecessors at Court—Catherine de Medicis for one—had promoted. During the Regency, attention had for the first time been paid to the chemistry of cookery ; the dinners of the Regent had been celebrated for their combination of refinement and art, "for matelotes of the most tempting quality," says Brillat-Savarin, "and for turkeys superbly stuffed." It was to Louis XV. that Madame du Barry gave the celebrated *petit souper* which led to the institution of the Order of the Cordon Bleu for accomplished *cuisiniers* ; and he is credited with the invention of *tables volantes* which, after each course, descended through the floor, and rose again replenished with fresh surprises.

The first Earl of Carlisle was known as the English Heliogabalus. When he travelled in France his horse was loosely shod with silver, so that on entering a paved town the animal in prancing and curvetting would cast his valuable shoes. But a silver-smith was always at hand to take other shoes from a tawny velvet bag and tack them on as needed. At one of his grand banquets a servant of the king was given a pie to eat which had cost ten pounds.

It was the ambition of this magnificent noble that his suppers should please the eye as well as the palate. On such occasions the company was ushered in to a table covered with the most elegant art, and

all in the greatest profusion. Every artistic effect which could be produced in combination by the silversmith, the confectioner, the cook, and the decorator was found there. But, of course, while the company was inspecting and admiring this delicate display the viands grew cold, and therefore unfit for choice palates. Then suddenly the doors were flung open, this ante-supper, as it was called, was quickly removed and another supper, quite hot, and presenting in every detail the exact duplicate of the one taken away, was served in its place with every perfection of generous profusion and ceremonial elegance.

In 1803 M. Grimod de la Reynière produced his "Almanach des Gourmands," the first serious attempt to invest gastronomy with the air of an intellectual and refined pursuit. In a subsequent work, "Le Manuel des Amphitryons," this great French authority gave a dissertation upon the art of carving, a compendium of menus, together with some informative notes on the polite art of dining.

The title of the last-named work recalls the classical fable from which it borrows its nomenclature. Jupiter assumed the likeness of Amphitryon and gave a banquet; but Amphitryon himself came home and claimed the honour of being the master of the house. As far as the servants and guests were concerned, the dispute was soon decided—he who gave the feast was to them the host. "Le véritable Amphitryon est l'Amphitryon où l'on dîne" (Molière).

France has produced its Brillat-Savarin, who in 1825 published his "Physiologie du Gout," than which a more elegant and witty compendium on the art of dining was never written.

With Savarin, eating was no mere vulgar pleasure; to him it was a solemn and exquisite duty which a man owed to himself, and to a generous Nature that had yielded her bounties to him for that

purpose. In all Savarin's recipes there is a pathetic anxiety lest some ingredient should be omitted or ill-used. For fish he entertains a profound respect ; for game, a manly affection ; for pasties, a delicate regard ; but truffles are the beloved darlings of his heart. He evinces a profound desire to teach people what to eat and how to eat it. In his eyes the cook is a true scientist, with an infinite capacity for effecting good and evil. It has been said that Brillat-Savarin's "Physiology of Taste" has converted a fair proportion of the reading public into gastronomers.

The Rev. Sydney Smith was an epicure whose salad-making gained him almost as wide a reputation as his wit. He had also a rhymed recipe for roasting mutton, of which one verse at least is quotable :—

"Gently stir and blow the fire,
Lay the mutton down to roast,
Dress it quickly, I desire,
In the dripping put a toast.
That I hunger may remove
Mutton is the meat I love."

His recipe for a winter salad, as it was originally written in an album at Castle Howard, ran in this wise :—

"Two large potatoes, passed through kitchen sieve,
Unwonted softness to the salad give.
Of mordant mustard add a single spoon—
Distrust the condiment which bites too soon—
But deem it not, thou man of herbs, a fault
To add a double quantity of salt.
Three times the spoon with oil of Lucca crown,
And once with vinegar produced from town.
True flavour needs it, and your poet begs
The pounded yellow of two well-boiled eggs.
Let onion's atoms lurk within the bowl,
And scarce suspected, animate the whole.
And lastly, on the flavoured compound toss
A magic teaspoon of anchovy sauce."

The late George Augustus Sala, who enjoyed a high reputation as a gastronomer, has pronounced this compound a barbarous mess. He took exception to potatoes being put in a green salad ; he objected to the mordant mustard as an unheard-of ingredient ; while as for the onions—intolerable to ladies—he would have substituted the French *chapon*, which is a crust of bread rubbed with garlic, and tossed to and fro with the herbs while they are being mixed, and then removed altogether.

The gourmet is sometimes met with the assumed air of an amused tolerance. But the fact remains that the bulk of us at times find ourselves indebted to his highly discriminating powers over the niceties of flavour, to the cultivated fastidiousness of his taste. He has taught us, for instance, that the insipidity of boiled fish requires the high relief of a piquant sauce, and a further uplifting from the beverage which accompanies it—say a glass of delicate-flavoured sherry. No fish sauce, in the opinion of the hard-mouthed Scottish epicure, was equal to that of Timothy Tickler, compounded of mushroom ketchup, mustard, cayenne-pepper, and “butter amalgamated on your plate, *propria manu* each man according to his own proportions.” But the ketchup must be “the real thing,” says Christopher North—made by the Yetholm gipsies.

There is a vast wealth of culinary lore scattered through the Waverley novels, and it has even been asserted that Scott had a hand in compiling the recipes for “Meg Dod’s Cookery Book.”

That prince of gourmets recalls with gusto the breakfasts which were given him by his friend Dalgleish, a some-time member for Glasgow, who had a beautiful estate on the Clyde. “Such breakfasts,” he exclaims, “we used to have at Kilmardinnie. Fresh trout, game pies, cold venison, a baron

of beef on the sideboard, home-made scones, potato scones, white puddings, and Scotch 'baps,' to say nothing of Dundee marmalade and Scotch bannocks."

The celebrated Count d'Orsay formed a gloomy opinion of the French restaurants of his day, where, he declared, "the culinary art had sadly fallen off." While no fare had been too rich for the Bourbons, the great Napoleon had contented himself with mutton and garlic. Writing from Paris in 1852, he says: "At none of these places could you find dinners now such as were produced by Ude; by Soyer, formerly with Lord Chesterfield; by Rotival, with Lord Wilton; or by Perron, with Lord Londonderry." He complains of the expensiveness and vulgarity of the cooking—

"a sort of tripotage of truffles, cockscombs, and crawfish, mounted on the back of a fillet of beef, and not a single entrée which a connoisseur can eat; the roast game tourmentés are cold, and their feathers are stuck on again before they are served. French gastronomy [he continues] has emigrated to England."

A discriminating palate, if not the canons of good taste, would demand from most of us, though we be not epicures, the observance of the eternal fitness in things gastronomical.

Thus the appropriate sauce should be infallibly coupled to each dish properly served, as in these piquant couplets:—

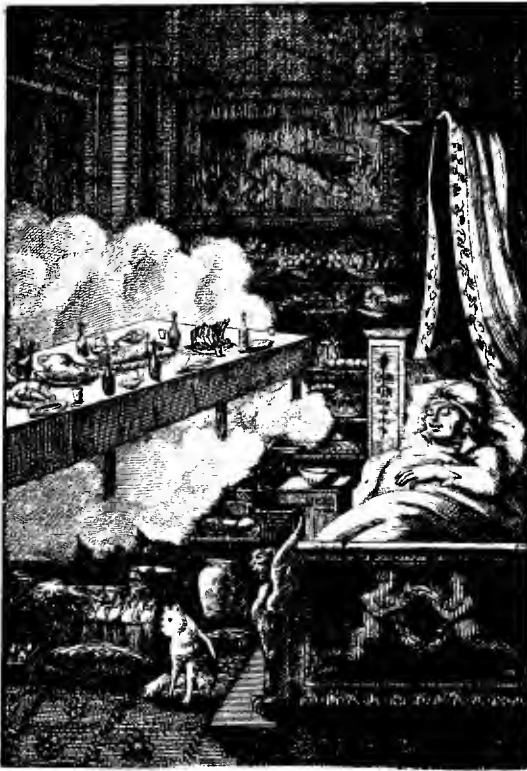
"Always have lobster sauce with salmon,
And put mint sauce your roasted lamb on.

Roast pork sans apple sauce, past doubt,
Is 'Hamlet' with the Prince left out.

Nice oyster sauce gives zest to cod—
A fish, when fresh, to feast a god!

It gives true epicures the vapours
To see boiled mutton minus capers."

In eating and drinking there are, as every one



THE GOURMAND'S DREAM.

From "Almanach des Gourmands" (1808).

(Reproduced from "The Greedy Book" by Frank Schloesser, by kind permission of the Author and Messrs. Gay & Hancock, Ltd.)

knows, likes and dislikes ; children are often " faddy " in this respect. Tastes and distastes are as diverse as they are inexplicable. Then there is—as distinct from epicurism—such a thing as fastidiousness in eating. It is given as a sample of Beau Brummell's wit—really, it savours more of impertinence—that when asked why he had not married a certain lady to whom he had been attentive, his elegancy replied, " My dear fellow, the thing was impossible. What could I do? I found that she actually ate cabbage ! "

Besides those who live to eat, there are those who merely eat to live—the reluctant eaters. They stoke. They do not eat, because they do not really enjoy their food. As Montaigne has said, " They do not eat, but only swallow."

That highly convenient form of eating, the portable meal known as the sandwich, was invented by, and named after, the fourth Earl of Sandwich. This notorious nobleman, who flourished in the eighteenth century, was so devoted to the gaming table that he would never rise willingly from it, even to go to dinner. So he devised this form of eating which he could indulge in while he continued his play.

There are many kinds of sandwiches, from the delicate fish and salad variety to the notorious leather and sawdust contrivance of the railway refreshment stall. The recipe for a substantial Scottish sandwich is to make it of beef, cut from the round, well mustarded, the fat to be only round the edges ; the thickness of the whole should be three half-inches, the middle layer the thinnest of the three, in a pepper-and-salt coat—" and confound the crust," says the oracle. The accompanying lesson in the eating of such a sandwich recommends the eater to open his mouth like a gentleman, " wide without gaping," and then perform " a civilised swallow, rather than a barbarous bolt."

XXIII

GASTROLATORS

The belly-god—The gluttons of antiquity—Some brilliant examples—The Sicilians a gluttonous people—The gormandising feast of Nicholas Wood—An appetite not measurable in larks—But possible in geese—Dando, the renowned oyster-eater—The feats of his Irish rival—The appetite of an ogre—A depraved appetite for putrid meat—The judicial opinion of “nae gormandeaser”—The glutton and his conscience.

THOSE who make their belly their god, Rabelais calls Gastrolators. Of these there are divers sorts. Beside the epicure and the gourmand there are, at the other extremity of the pole, the glutton, and the gorger. Pandarea, a celebrated eater of antiquity, could pass days and nights at the table without experiencing the slightest indigestion. His life was a continual sacrifice to his god.

The Emperor Septimus Severus died of eating and drinking too much. Valentinianus went off in a surfeit. Maximilian devoured in one day forty pounds of solid meat, which he washed down with a hogshead of wine. Philoxenes wished he had a neck like a crane, that the delicious morsels might be long in going down. Lucullus, at a costly feast which he gave to certain Ambassadors of Asia, among other trifles, took to his own portion a “griph” boiled, and a fat goose in paste. A “griph” was doubtless some particularly choice specimen of a “fearful wild fowl”—not improbably a ger-falcon.

Antiquity produced a number of gluttons whose marvellous feats place them in the front rank. Titormus had an ox served for his supper, and when he rose from the table not a morsel remained. (The classic writers who swallowed this tale are not generally included in our category.) Astydama's of Miletus, invited to supper by the Persian Ariobarzanes, devoured a feast which had been prepared for nine persons. Cambis, King of Lydia, had an appetite so fiercely compelling that one night the glutton unfortunately devoured his wife! Thys, King of the Paphlagonians, was afflicted with a voracity which had a precisely similar annoying result. Then there was the Persian Cantibaris, the energy of whose appetite caused him to eat so long that it required relays of attentive servants to press the food into his mouth. Modern efforts after these brilliant examples may appear somewhat feeble.

The Sicilians of old were as notorious for their gluttony as were the Spartans for their abstemiousness.

The Romans, as a nation, were enormous eaters; and the average robust Britisher of the John Bull type is by no means an indifferent trencherman, though his gourmanderie may be less discriminating than that of the ancients.

A healthy appetite is no doubt a blessing. "Let us raise our gratitude to the goodness of God," says that old gossip, Thomas Fuller, "especially when he giveth us appetite enough for our meat, and yet meat too much for our appetite." To this worthy's period—the seventeenth century—belongs one of the greatest stuffers whose feats have ever been recorded. This was Nicholas Wood, who challenged Taylor the Water Poet to eat at one time as much black-pudding as would reach across the Thames at any place between London and Richmond. "Two loynes

of mutton and one loyne of veal were but as three sprats to him." The following account is extracted from "The Wonders of Nature," by William Turner, M.A., Vicar of Walberton, in Sussex, published in 1697 (chapter ix., "Wonderful Eaters") :—

"Nicolas Wood, of Harrison, in the county of Kent, Yeoman, did with ease eat a whole Sheep of 16s. Price, and that raw, at one meal; at another time he eat 30 dozen of Pidgeons. At Sir William Sidley's he eat as much as would have sufficed 30 Men; at the Lord Wotton's, in Kent, he eat at one meal Fourscore and four Rabbets, which number would have sufficed 168 Men, allowing to each half a Rabbet; he suddenly devoured 18 yards of black pudding, and when at once he had 60 pound weight of Cherries he said they were but wash-meat; he made an end of a whole Hog at once, and after it for fruit swallowed three Pecks of Damsons. After he had broken his Fast, having, as he said, eaten one Pottle of Milk, one Pottle of Pottage, with Bread, Butter, and Cheese; he eat in my presence, saith Taylor, 6 penny wheaten Loaves, 3 six-penny Veal Pies, one pound of sweet Butter, one good Dish of Thornback, and a shiver off a Peck Household Loaf of an Inch thick, and all this in the space of an hour, the House yielding no more he departed unsatisfied. One John Dale was too hard for him; he laid a Wager, he would fill Wood's belly with wholsom Victuals for two Shillings; another Wagered, that when he had eaten Dale's two shillings, he should forthwith eat up a good Sirloin of Beef. Dale bought six Pots of mighty Ale, and twelve new penny white Loaves, which he sop'd in the Ale; the powerful Fume whereof Conquered this Conqueror, and laid him in a Sleep, to the preservation of the Roast-beef; and unexpected winning of the Wager. He spent all his Estate to provide for his Belly, and though a Landed Man, and true Labourer, died Poor about 1630."

Marshal Villars had a house-porter who was an enormous eater. "Franz," said the Marshal one day, "tell me, now, how many loins you could eat." "Ah! my lord, as for loins, not many; five or six at most." "And how many legs of mutton?" "Ah! as for legs of mutton; not many, seven or eight, perhaps." "And fatted pullets?" "Ah! as for pullets, my lord, not many; not more than

a dozen." "And pigeons?" "Ah! as for pigeons, not many; perhaps forty—fifty at most, according to the appetite." "And larks?" "Ah! as for that, my lord—little larks, for ever, my lord, for ever!"

A humorous Yorkshire tale is that of the eating match between two men named Gubbins and Muggins, which caused a great deal of interest in the neighbourhood: a countryman, leaving the place a little before the match was decided, was stopped by almost every one on the road, with "Who beats?" "How does the match get on?" &c., to which he answered, "Why, I doant exactly know—they say Gubbins 'll get it; but I thinks Muggins 'll beat un yet, for when I left *he was oonly two geese and a turkey behind him.*"

Staffordshire humour on a similar subject is less extravagant. As expressed in the Darlaston man's opinion of the goose, it is: "The goose is a foolish bird; it's too much for one, and not enough for two."

Oysters are popularly supposed to aid in their own digestion, and it is to be fervently hoped such is the case, as oyster-eating has been looked upon by some people as a gastronomical accomplishment. In 1839 there appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* a series of papers, "Some Account of Himself, by the Irish Oyster-Eater"; and in the late "fifties" there died the renowned Dando, the professional oyster-eater, who was honoured by Blackwood with an epitaph in blank verse.

According to the bard, Dando's "gustful" appetite was hereditary, for on the mother's side there once had been

"A Mayor of Colchester who, it was said,
Married a mermaid and would sometimes eat
Half his own weight of oysters in the day."

For eight months of the year Dando would go from oyster-house to oyster-house "astonishing the natives," though he was not always particular about paying for the oysters he consumed, for which unmannerly neglect sometimes he was haled before the magistrates. His final resting-place is thus described :—

"In Clerkenwell there is a lowly grave,
That has become 'a place of pilgrimage,'
And not the 'cockle-shell' the pilgrim bears,
But shell of shapeliest native, to be placed
In glistening row around that humble sod,
By row on row thus circled."

This hero—or imbecile—was made the subject of a tale by Thackeray. As to his Irish rival, the following extract from his molluscary record will serve to give some idea of his powers :—

"The day before he finally took to his bed, from which he never rose, he devoured for a trifling wager (see 'Bell's Life in London') a couple of hundreds of full-sized Malabides, six score to the hundred, in nineteen minutes and thirty-five seconds, with ease, getting through his fish, as was remarked by the bystanders, in a style equal if not superior to the performances of Dando himself."

The following amusing anecdote appeared in a book published in 1823, with illustrations by the inimitable George Cruikshank :—

"When Charles Gustavus, King of Sweden, was besieging Prague, a boor of a most extraordinary visage desired admittance to his tent; and being allowed to enter, he offered, by way of amusement, to devour a large hog in his presence. The old General Koenigsmark, who stood by the King's side, hinted to his royal master that the peasant ought to be burnt as a sorcerer. 'Sir,' said the fellow, irritated at the remark, 'if your Majesty will but make that old gentleman take off his sword and spurs, I will eat him before I begin the pig.' General Koenigsmark, who at the head of a body of Swedes performed wonders against the Austrians, could not stand this

proposal, especially as it was accompanied by a most hideous expansion of the jaws and mouth. Without uttering a word, the veteran turned pale, and suddenly ran out of the tent; nor did he think himself safe till he arrived at his quarters."

The diary of Thomas Hearne, antiquary, under date 1722, contains a record of a man who had been at Oxford, not long before, who was notorious for a morbid appetite which led him to devour large quantities of raw, half-putrid meat. The common story told regarding him was that he had once attempted to imitate the Saviour's fast of forty days, but broke down in it, and "was taken with this unnatural way of eating."

The Shepherd of "Noctes Ambrosianæ" was "nae glutton—nae gormandeaser—but a man o' a gude—a great appetite," who could eat "hodge-podge," or boiling broth, with the thermometer at eighty. Yet he was of opinion that though cheese might be capital in the forenoon, or in the afternoon, when one had "had nae ither denner," only gluttonous epicures would have recourse to it after they had "been stuffin' themselves" with a dinner of several courses.

Indeed, he was quite sure that "nae healthy man has ony use for mair than half a dozen dishes at dinner—soup, fish, flesh, tairts, and cheese"; to which mild estimate Tickler takes exception, objecting to a stomach being distended with soup, to the pernicious "pasticcios of the pastry-cook," to the savoury game being succeeded by sweets and a quantity of cheese, and the whole crowned with a variety of flatulent fruits and those indigestible knick-knacks which are often included under the name of "dessert." He likens the stomach which is thus made to receive, not one full meal, but a succession of meals, rapidly following each other, to the witches' cauldron in "Macbeth," the contents of which, as

we all know, were as miscellaneous and promiscuous as the teeming brain of a Shakespeare could make them.

In the old style of electioneering nothing was ever found so efficacious in winning support as the candidate's indulgence of the voters in unlimited eating and drinking. This is illustrated by Hogarth in his picture "The Election Entertainment," which forms the frontispiece of this book. The scene is the interior of a country inn, and in the foreground a boy is seen making punch in nothing less than a mash-tub. Though the dishes have been removed from the table, the alderman and the parson are seen still stuffing. The former, gorged with oysters, is apparently dying with one on his fork, while the barber-surgeon is vainly attempting to recover him by bleeding. The voracious divine is cramming himself with the remains of a haunch of venison, which for the indulgence of his palate he is heating in a chafing-dish of coals, though almost fainting with the task. Other details will discover the artist's sardonic humour in satirising man's gross indulgence of the gluttonous propensity.

A dialogue between a Glutton and his conscience was written in the seventeenth century in an ingenious form of echo ; it appeared in a Cambridge pamphlet of 1634, entitled "Hygiasticon : or the Right Course of Preserving Life and Health into Extreme Old Age" :—

Gl. My belly do I deifie.

Echo. Fie.

Gl. Who curbs his appetite's a fool.

Echo. Ah fool !

Gl. I do not like this abstinence.

Echo. Hence.

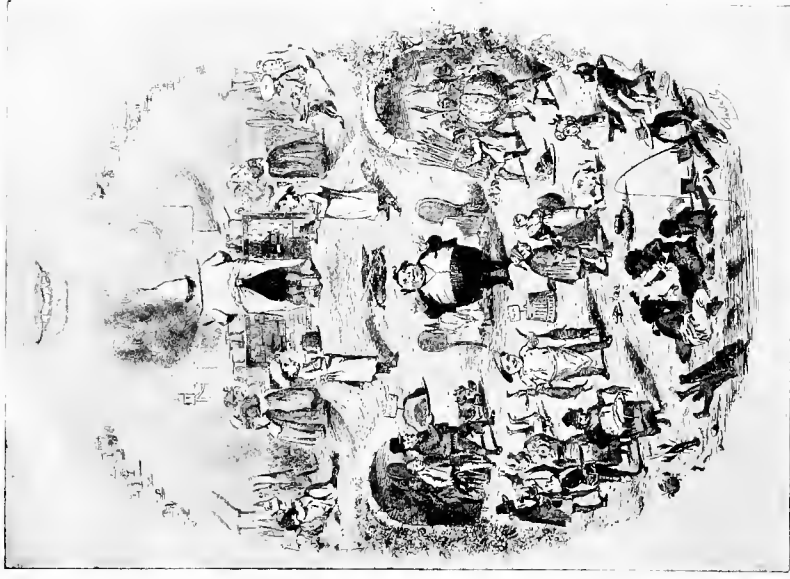
Gl. My joy's a feast, my wish is wine.

Echo. Swine.

Gl. We epicures are happie truly.

Echo. You lie.

- Gl.* Who's that which giveth me the lie
Echo. I.
- Gl.* What? *Echo,* thou that mock'st a voice?
Echo. A voice.
- Gl.* May I not, *Echo,* eat my fill?
Echo. Ill.
- Gl.* Will't hurt me if I drink too much?
Echo. Much.
- Gl.* Thou mock'st me, *Nymph;* I'll not believe it.
Echo. Believe't.
- Gl.* Dost thou condemn then what I do?
Echo. I do.
- Gl.* I grant it doth exhaust the purse.
Echo. Worse.
- Gl.* Is't this which dulls the sharpest wit?
Echo. Best wit.
- Gl.* Is't this which brings infirmities?
Echo. It is.
- Gl.* Whither will't bring my soul? canst tell?
Echo. T' hell.
- Gl.* Dost thou no gluttons virtuous know?
Echo. No.
- Gl.* Wouldst have me temperate till I die?
Echo. I.
- Gl.* Shall I therein find ease and pleasure?
Echo. Yea sure.
- Gl.* But is't a thing which profit brings?
Echo. It brings.
- Gl.* To minde or bodie, or to both?
Echo. To both.
- Gl.* Will it my life on earth prolong?
Echo. O long!
- Gl.* Will it make me vigorous until death?
Echo. Till death.
- Gl.* Will't bring me to eternall blisse?
Echo. Yes.
- Gl.* Then, sweetest Temperance, I'll love thee
Echo. I love thee.
- Gl.* Then, swinish Gluttonie, I'll leave thee.
Echo. I'll leave thee.
- Gl.* I'll be a belly-god no more.
Echo. No more.
- Gl.* If all be true which thou dost tell,
 They who fare sparingly fare well.
Echo. Farewell."



"MEATS,"

Drawing by Bertall, from "La Physiologie du Goût" by Brillat Savarin.



"DRINKS,"

(Reproduced from "The Greedy Book," by Frank Schloesser, by kind permission of the Author and Messrs. Gay & Hancock, Ltd.)

XXIV

“GOOD FOR FOOD”

Human teeth—Their adaptability—The chewing propensity—Comfits—Cachous—Geophagy—Lithophagy—The “fire-eater”—Flesh food—No part of the animal excluded—Not even blood—Or entrails—Nor do wild animals escape—Animal products—Eggs various—Cheese, its ancient and honourable history—The harvest of the sea—Statute of Herrings—Turtle—Insectivorous man.

MAN alone seems provided with a case of instruments which can be adapted to the mastication of every kind of food—he has teeth to cut, to pierce and tear, to champ and grind—and therefore nothing that can possibly be regarded as edible comes amiss to him. This being so, the subject of man’s dietary is too vast to have more than the bare fringe of it touched upon here.

The source of man’s animal food covers the widest range possible. It is, in fact, the whole earth, with the heavens above, and the waters under the earth. Considerations of space would forbid even a bare list of the animal products which man has here, or elsewhere, considered “good for food,” even if lists were not always wearisome and uninteresting reading. Some of the items, however, which stand out, are really worth naming.

Massinger’s estimate of Providence is very true :—

“There’s no want of meat, Sir,
Portly and curious viands are prepared
To please all kinds of appetite.”

To say that man had an insatiable maw would be libellous and untrue ; but his jaws certainly would seem to be incapable of fatigue, as witness the extensive consumption of betel-nut in the East, and of chewing-gum in the West. Coming nearer home, that old-time custom of eating comfits may be recalled. In France the carrying of comfit-boxes had developed into a fashion by the close of the sixteenth century. The courtiers of Henry III. did not seem able to exist without the abundant use of comfits, and so everybody carried a box of them, which were used on all occasions, grave and gay. When the Duke of Guise was shot at Blois he was found with his comfit-box still in his hand.

For the chewing of cachous perhaps an entirely different reason might be assigned ; but it has been claimed that this form of mouth exercise, which is often seen in a similar habit of the countryman who chews a straw, is instinctive—that the exercise of the organs of mastication, and the turning about of the tongue, set the salivary glands at work, and that the downward flow of alkaline saliva is the natural corrective of an excess of acid in the stomach—that it is, in fact, Nature’s preventive against dyspepsia.

It was Humboldt who first made us acquainted with the geophagists. From his account of the Ottomaques of the Orinoco we learn that they “ feed on a fat, unctuous earth, or species of pipeclay, tinged with a little oxide of iron. They collect this clay very carefully, distinguishing it by the taste ; they knead it into balls of four or five inches in diameter, which they bake slightly before a slow fire. Whole stacks of such provisions are seen piled up in

their huts. These balls are soaked in water when about to be used, and each individual eats about a pound of the material a day." The only addition they make to this unnatural fare consists of small fish, lizards, and fern-roots. Humboldt expresses the opinion that their organs of digestion probably have the power of extracting from this clay something convertible into animal substance.

A tribe of Indians on the Mackenzie River above Bear Lake are known to eat a kind of unctuous mud; and Russell, in the "Natural History of Aleppo," describes a kind of fullers' earth there, called Byloon, which is carried into the city on the backs of asses, and regularly sold in the streets. This earth is mixed with dried rose-leaves and made up into balls for eating, its use being confined to pregnant women and sickly girls.

A yellowish earth is eaten by the natives of New Guinea; a species of oolite is used as a foodstuff by the inhabitants of New Caledonia; in several parts of Peru a calcareous earth is reduced to fine powder and mixed with cocoa; Ampo is the name of little balls of reddish clay which are bought in the markets of Java, and eaten by the fair Javanese who wish to become thin and graceful; and even in some parts of Europe geophagy is not unknown. The Swedes have a "mountain meal," or *bergmehl*, as they call it, which they sometimes mix with their flour; and the workmen in the free-stone quarries of Kiffhausen were wont to spread on their bread, instead of butter, a very fine clay called "stein-butter."

It is solemnly recorded by Hone, in his "Table Book," that there was once a stone-eater—a man who was born by the side of a rocky cave in the Peak, Derbyshire, and whose mother dreamed her offspring would be an ostrich. To read this ogre's

autobiography is more than a dream—it is a nightmare. We are asked to believe this lithophagous being could swallow flint easier than he could bread, and preferred pebbles to cake, though he sometimes took “Norfolk dumplins” by way of a change. Though this may be to a large extent a farrago of nonsense, it is quite probable that the Orinoco Indians indulged in the habit of eating clay more for the pleasure of a distended stomach than for any real nourishment to be obtained from such diet.

The “fire-eater” is, of course, a trickster; he was always to be seen in the old country fairs, and to this day makes his occasional appearance as a “turn” on the music-hall stage. Only one exploit of this kind need be recalled here.

At White Conduit House, Islington, then a popular place of resort, on June 7, 1826, an entertainment was given by one Monsieur Chalbert, who, after a luncheon of phosphorus, arsenic, oxalic acid, boiling oil, and molten lead, walked into a hot oven, preceded by a leg of lamb and a rumpsteak. On the last two, when properly baked, the spectators dined with him.

Of this “ordinary most extraordinary” the incredulous critics of the time said with some wit, if not with some truth, that if the salamander was not “done brown,” his gulls were.

Prescott the historian ate soap under the theory that men should be clean inside as well as out!

It is curious to notice the various parts of animals that are selected as choice morsels by different persons, classes, or peoples, as sheep’s head, pig’s head, calf’s head and brains, ox tongue, reindeer tongue, walrus tongue, and crane’s tongue. In China fowls’ and ducks’ tongues are esteemed an exquisite dainty. The pettitoes of the sucking pig, sheep’s trotters, cow heel, bear’s paw, ox tail,

lamb's tail, kangaroo tail are all dainties somewhere, or with some people. Among the entrails of animals regarded as choice are lamb's fry, pig's fry, tripe, chitterlings, the cleaned gut for sausages, &c. The Hungarian *salami* is a pork sausage as thick as a man's arm. We indulge even in blood as black-pudding; at the dinner of a Chinese mandarin one may be served with blood-cakes. Dainties perhaps not so commonly known include the mouffe, or loose covering of the nose of the great moose deer, the hump of the buffalo, and the feet and trunk of the elephant; while the muscle of the buffalo and the wild hog, "jerked" or dried in the sun and then termed "dendeng," is a delicacy which the Chinese import at high prices from Siam and the eastern islands.

The Emperor Napoleon once partook of an African dinner in which figured tortoise broth (as the equivalent, no doubt, of turtle soup), porcupine, gazelle, loin of wild boar, antelope, cutlets, roast ostrich with pomegranate jelly, and other dishes of distinctly "local colouring."

"A very fantastical banquet,
Just so many strange dishes."

Monkeys are eaten in Ceylon, bats in certain islands of the Indian Ocean, the prairie wolf by the Indians of North America, the alligator in Brazil, the puma in Central America, the sloth in South America, the reindeer in Sweden, the horse in Germany and other continental countries, the dog in China; indeed, it is difficult to say what creature escapes the omnivorous appetite of man. A bill of fare in that cosmopolitan city San Francisco will include such items as these:—

Grimalkin steaks	...	...	...	...	25 cents
Bow-wow soup	...	...	...	...	12 "
Stews ratified	...	...	...	...	6 "

Not only animal flesh but animal products enter very largely into man's bill of fare. Eggs of different animals are generally regarded as choice articles of food, not only those of ordinary domestic fowl but eggs of sea-fowl and plovers, of the ostrich, and even of tortoises and insects, not to mention the roes of fishes. With the Chinese unhatched ducks and chicken are a favourite dish, and rotten eggs are by no means rejected.

It has been noted as a curious fact by Professor A. Henry that the Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans, who number one-third of the human race, abstain from the use of milk, cheese, and butter, to which abstention, he says, it is probable they owe the absence of zymotic disease among them. He notices also that they are a grave people, who never unbend in laughter, whereas the Thibetans, who indulge largely in milk, cheese, and butter, are a merry, mirth-loving people.

Cheese, as a food, is as wholesome as its use is widespread; as an item in a coursed dinner there is nothing known to the world of gastronomy which can so quickly rectify the palate, between the sweets and the dessert, like the tang of a true cheese.

“Bread-and-cheese” is the typical all-sufficing fare of those content and robust enough to live without the luxuries of life; from the days of our earliest English comedy it appears to have been so considered, for it is in “Gammer Gurton's Needle,” written in 1565, we find it named, in conjunction with that typical English dainty, “apple-pie,” in the well-known verse:—

“If all the world were apple-pie,
 And all the seas were ink,
 And all the trees were bread-and-cheese,
 My stars! what should we drink?”

To the English palate there is perhaps no cheese

more acceptable than that produced on the rich pastures of the Vale Royal of England, where it was once the custom to mould it into the form of a cat, whence the term "Cheshire Cat." But there are probably varieties of cheese sufficient to meet every variety of taste. The aristocratic Stilton is made with all the cream in the milk; Cheddar and Double Gloucester with new milk from which a part of the cream has been removed. Single Gloucester is made from skim-milk, like the Gouda cheese, with delicate transparent shavings of which the Dutch make such palatable sandwiches. The rich cheese of Gorgonzola is made from ewe's milk, at the village of that name, near Milan; and the spongy, strong-flavoured Gruyère is the product of goat's milk from the pastures of the high Alps.

But the peculiar qualities and particular virtues of all the famous makes are best seen in the French "Ode to Cheese" of M. Thomas Braun, so admirably Englished by Mr. J. Bithell:—

"God of the country, bless to-day Thy cheese,
 For which we give Thee thanks on bended knees.
 Let them be fat or light, with onions blent,
 Shallots, brine, pepper, honey; whether scent
 Of sheep or fields is in them, in the yard
 Let them, good Lord, at dawn be beaten hard?
 And let their edges take on silvery shades
 Under the most red hands of dairymaids;
 And, round and greenish, let them go to town
 Weighing the shepherd's folding mantle down;
 Whether from Parma or from Jura heights,
 Kneaded by august hands of Carmelites,
 Stamped with the mitre of a proud abbess,
 Flowered with the perfumes of the grass of Bresse,
 From hollow Holland, from the Vosges, from Brie,
 From Roquefort, Gorgonzola, Italy!
 Bless them, good Lord! Bless Stilton's royal fare,
 Red Cheshire, and the tearful, cream Gruyère!

Bless Kantercaas, and bless the Mayence round,
Where aniseed and other grains are found ;
Bless Edam, Pottekees, and Gouda then,
And those that we salute with ‘Sir,’ like men.”

No manufactured foodstuff has a more ancient, honourable, and varied history than cheese.

An abundance of fish is yielded by the harvest of the sea. This abundance has been well described by Milton :—

“Each creek and bay
With fry innumerable swarms, and shoals
Of fish, that with their fins and shining scales
Glide under the green waves.”

The Statute of Herrings passed in the reign of Edward III. shows the great request in which this useful article of food was then held. Whales and great sturgeons taken in the sea were once reserved for royalty. In the time of Edward I. a tariff of fish prices was fixed at these limits : Best soles, 3d. per dozen ; best mackerel (in Lent), 1d. each ; best pickled herrings, 20 for 1d. ; fresh oysters, 2d. per gallon ; eels, 2d. for a quarter of a hundred.

Turtle, the great West Indian luxury, generally arrives about the latter end of May or the beginning of June, though from the uncertainties of a sea voyage in the old days no exact period for its first appearance could be fixed. In 1814 it was so unusually late that at the magnificent banquet given in Guildhall to the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia on June 18th there was positively no turtle to be had.

The weight of a turtle varies from 30 to 500 or 600 pounds, and the price from 2s. 6d. to 5s. per lb. The cooking is generally performed by a professed “artist,” whose fee is from one to two guineas. Epicures of note have been known to

prefer it cut into steaks and broiled, to be eaten with melted butter, cayenne pepper, and the juice of a Seville orange ; they say that the flesh thus simply dressed retains more of its true flavour than when made into callipash and callipee.

Calf's head, which is susceptible of as many culinary operations as the head of an ingenious cook can devise, forms the base of a soup called "mock-turtle," and, in cases of emergency, may serve as an augmentative ingredient to real turtle soup.

Though English prejudice has drawn the line at insects as an article of diet, the poet Herrick has alluded to this class of food as the choicest cates for fairy elves. In his "Hesperides" (1658) he thus describes the feast given by Oberon :—

"Gladding his palate with some store
Of emmets' eggs ; what could he more ?
But beards of mice, a newt's stewed thigh,
A bloated earwig, and a fly."

The Digger Indians in the summer regale themselves with roast grasshoppers, ants are eaten by various uncivilised peoples, while the Bushmen revel in fat caterpillars. The natives of the Navigator Islands eat the sea-slug, which they call palolo, and on the Chilian coast the cuttle-fish forms an article of diet.

XXV

NATIONAL FOODS AND NATIONAL PREJUDICES

Characteristic foods—Environment and diet—Oil and flesh in high latitudes—Raw, putrefying and “living flesh”—Wriggling worms—Strange prejudices and strange tastes—Omnivorous Chinese—Edible frogs—Spanish olla—Hellenic diet—Russian dishes—Italian *farinata*—Origin of the name “Macaroni”—Kuscoussoo—Irish cookery—English meat-eating—The “Welsh Rabbit”—Scottish “foul feeding”—Doric dishes—Oatmeal—Singed sheep’s head—Hotch-potch—Haggis—Cock-a-leekie—Rumblethumps—Parritch—Sowens—American “pork and beans.”

POPULAR opinion holds firmly to the idea of “national dishes,” or at least insists upon associating certain viands with certain nationalities. It is thus we speak of English roast beef, Scotch haggis, Irish stew, and (if we dare venture to name it) Welsh “rabbit.” Similar associations of ideas occur in the terms French ragout, Spanish olla, Italian macaroni, Russian caviare, German sausage, and so on; the place and the product naturally coming together in one’s mind when the thoughts are directed to any part of the world’s commissariat arrangements. To France belong her stews, soufflés, and vegetable *entremets*; to Italy what are called *farinata*; whilst English cookery revels in its roasts.

The inhabitants of high altitudes require an immense amount of animal food; vegetable food is not only unsuitable, but is practically unobtain-

able in regions that are icebound for the greater part of the year. In this case, at least, Byron's comparison to the "preying" instinct is unfair:—

"But man is a carnivorous production
And must have meals—at least once a day;
He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suction,
But, like the shark and tiger, must have prey."

Sir John Ross estimated that an Esquimaux eats twenty pounds weight of flesh food in a day.

In such latitudes it may be convenient and even necessary for the inhabitants to eat their food without preparation, but in all temperate and warm climates the art of cookery prevails to a greater or less extent.

One difference between man and the brute creation is this—that whereas the various species of animal are, for the most part, restricted to particular regions or localities, man is spread over every portion of the earth's surface.

The Greenlanders live exclusively on animal substances. They may sometimes, indeed, find a few berries, and they sometimes make a meal of the seaweed they pick up on the shore; but these are merely the exceptions which prove the rule.

The Laplanders live principally upon dried fish and the flesh of the reindeer and the bear. They make a kind of bread of the powdered bones of fishes mixed with the tender bark of the pine or birch tree. Their usual drink is whale-oil, or water in which juniper berries have been infused.

The wandering Calmuc Tartars eat the flesh of horses, wild asses, and other animals, either raw or with a slight degree of preparation, which it very often undergoes by putrefying under their saddles. Their common drink is mare's milk, fermented with the flour of millet. The flesh of the ass is not un-

palatable to the Persians, and Galen compared it to that of the stag.

The belle of the Sandwich Islands will swallow half a dozen raw mackerel for breakfast, and by a great play of facial expression exhibit her intense satisfaction ; the Arabs often eat sheep's kidney or liver raw, seasoned only with a liberal sprinkling of salt ; the marrow of a newly-slain animal, warm with the natural heat of the living creature, is considered by Greenlanders and Laplanders the greatest of all dainties—and they split the bones with stone hatchets precisely as did primeval man.

Travellers in Abyssinia have reported a practice once prevalent there of eating meat cut from a living cow. Bruce says he saw some natives near Axum cut thick steaks from the buttock of a beast, and then drawing the skin, which had been left entire, over the wound, fasten it down with skewers or pins. The treatment was completed by preparing a cataplasm of clay, with which they covered the suture. After regaling themselves on the flesh, raw and yet quivering with life, "they forced the animal to rise, and drove it on, gently as before."

The aborigines of Australia are entirely carnivorous, varying a flesh diet of kangaroo, opossum, bandacoot, and rat with wild honey and all sorts of insects. A traveller who spent several years among the "black fellows" relates how they probe into the bark of trees with a tomahawk and extracting grubs and insects—"fat, wriggling things"—cram them into their mouths and devour them with very evident relish.

The inhabitants of the Ladrone Islands offer a fair contrast ; they subsist solely on roots, fruits, and fish, and are invariably healthy and muscular, living to an extreme old age.

After environment (which determines a nation's

indigenous food, as it does also the ability to command extraneous foodstuffs) the two greatest factors in determining diet are custom and prejudice. It is custom which induces us to accept most of the foods we eat ; it is prejudice which causes us to reject many others which, in themselves, are really toothsome and wholesome, if we could but bring our minds to venture upon them.

Although the Turks are by no means squeamish in their diet, they will not eat oysters. In Chinese cities rats sell at two shillings a dozen, and in the butchers' shops the hind-quarters of the dog hang side by side with those of the sheep, and command a higher price per pound. The edible birds' nests of the same omnivorous people fetch double their weight in silver, the finest varieties, indeed, commanding six sovereigns the pound. These nests consist of a gelatinous substance secreted by the sea-swallow of the Malay Peninsula, and the Chinaman makes excellent soup of them, as he also does with the sea-slug of Australia.

Captain Laplace has described one of the feasts he attended in China. The first course was laid out in a great number of saucers, and consisted of various relishes in a cold state, among them being salted earth-worms, prepared and dried, but so cut up and disguised that he, fortunately, did not know at the time what he was eating ; then followed smoked fish and ham, cut small, and swimming in soup. These dishes were succeeded by pigeons' eggs, cooked in gravy, ducks and fowls, cut very small and immersed in a dark-coloured sauce, and little balls made of sharks' fins, pounded shrimps, and maggots of an immense size. The Captain says that his greatest difficulty was to seize his prey floating in the various bowls of gravy—in his unaccustomed hands the chop-sticks were always eluded by the delicate

morsels he coveted. This was the more unfortunate, he continues, as a Chinese host is not satisfied that his guests have done justice to his fare until they begin to emit those sonorous eructations which usually proceed from an overloaded stomach.

The West Indian negroes refuse to touch stewed rabbit, but eat palm-worms fried in fat, and baked snakes. Parrots, though tough, are eaten in Mexico. The natives of the Antilles eat alligators' eggs, and lizards' eggs are commonly devoured in the Pacific Islands. Up to the beginning of the eighteenth century turtle, now the luxury of the rich, served as the common food of the poorest inhabitants of Jamaica. In Brazil ants are consumed, served with a resinous sauce; in Siam the same insects are eaten curried. The Cingalese, after robbing the bee of its honey, eat it; and the Chinese, always models of thrift, after winding the silk from the cocoon, eat the chrysalis of the silkworm.

As every one knows, the esculent or edible frog is considered quite a luxury in France, Germany, and Italy. Those brought to the markets of Paris are caught in the stagnant waters round Montmorency, in the Bois de Vincennes, the Bois de Boulogne, and elsewhere. The people who collect them separate the hind-quarters and legs from the body, carefully skin them, arrange them on skewers, as larks are in this country, and so bring them to market. The dealers sometimes prepare toads in the same way, and as it requires an expert eye to discern the difference, the Parisians are sometimes, literally, if unconsciously, "toad-eaters."

England is one of the few countries where these delicacies are not appreciated. Frogs are gladly eaten in the United States and Canada, as well as all over the Continent. According to a recent American consular report, frogs to the value of

£40,000 were sold in Montreal in 1909, at the average price of 1s. 8d. a pound. One hotel alone in Toronto is said to sell about 1,500 lb. of frogs' legs every year.

Sir Kenelm Digby, whose cookery-book is referred to elsewhere, having resided in Spain some time, is able to give a recipe for the Spanish olla-podrida, as it was prepared in the seventeenth century. The medium for a good plain "Spanish oglia" is, of course, "a great pot" of water which must be kept gently boiling for five or six hours, and the materials consist of a rump of beef, a loin of mutton, a piece of veal, two chickens, or else three pigeons, a piece of "enterlarded bacon," and three or four onions. Each ingredient, beginning with the beef, and ending with the onions, must be thrown into the pot at such a time as will ensure the whole being completely cooked at the same moment. About half an hour before the oglia is done a "porrender full" of the broth should be taken out, flavoured with pepper, salt, five or six cloves, and a nutmeg, and then poured back again.

The cookery of Spain is often unjustly disparaged, and this may be not a little owing to the number of errors which occur in the English translations of "Don Quixote," and which the late George Augustus Sala was at some pains to point out and correct. Does not the troubled Englishman exclaim over "the piggy food of the Spaniard"?

Cervantes says that the Knight of the Rueful Countenance fed one day in the week upon "olla," which is a great deal more than soup, being composed of different sorts of meats and vegetables stewed together, taking its name from the round earthen pot in which the mess is prepared. The English translator says that the Don's olla contained more mutton than beef, but Cervantes himself says

just the opposite, namely, that there was more beef than mutton. Then the translator goes on to say that the "fragments" of the soup were served up "cold on most nights"; an error, says Sala, in the translation of the Spanish word *salpicon*, which answers to our word *salmagundi*, which denotes a mixture of chopped meat, eggs, anchovies, and red pickled cabbage.

The Hellenes keep a kitchen which is neither copious nor very refined. The staple food of the modern Greeks consists of bread, which is dark in colour and coarse in texture, grapes, and black olives. They eat a milky kind of cheese (*turi*) and are addicted to sousing all their dishes with olive oil. A common repast of a Greek peasant is a hunch of bread, scored with the knife into a criss-cross pattern, seasoned with pepper and salt, and drenched in oil. During the long and severe fasts of the Greek Church large quantities of dried fish are consumed. Eggs are in large demand, the favourite vegetables are onions and cabbages, while oil and garlic never seem to come amiss. In Greek sweet dishes, and even in some of the savoury ones, honey is commonly used.

The fare of the Russian peasantry is sufficiently coarse, but it is an error to suppose it mainly consists of rye bread, pickled cucumbers, caviare, and train oil. Certain of the national dishes of Russia are regularly served in their best hotels. A good Russian dinner is preceded by a variety of "snacks" placed on a tray, either on the sideboard of the dining-room or on a table in the drawing-room where the guests are received. These relishes may include fresh caviare, raw herrings, smoked salmon, sun-dried sturgeon, raw smoked goose, radishes, cheese, sliced sausages, cod-sounds, raw ham, bread, and butter. With these appear tiny liqueur glasses of kummel, kirsch-wasser, maraschino, anisette, and vodka or

corn brandy. Sometimes a cold soup is served, made of a stock of half-fermented rye or barley-beer, with pieces of herring, cucumber, meat, and ice floating in it. The Russians are fond of smoked fish, cut into slices and served with a sauce of mustard, olive oil, and vinegar. They are also given to cold-boiled sucking-pig; the animal is boiled in white wine, boned after it has cooled, and then encrusted in a mould of powdered ice and aspic jelly, and served with poached white of egg, gherkins, beetroot, and other garnishings.

Quass, the fermented cabbage-water of the Russians, is described as tasting like stale fish and soapsuds, yet it has millions of votaries. In the colder regions of the country tallow-candles are not despised as an article of diet.

Of Italian dishes none is better known than macaroni. It first attracted the notice of English travellers in the eighteenth century, and the young bloods of that day, on their return from the grand tour, borrowed its name for their most fashionable club. This set of travelled fops, as vicious as they were exclusive, called themselves the Macaronis, and introduced this dish at Almack's subscription table.

According to Mr. Tom Murrey, a writer on culinary matters, the word "Macaroni" had a most interesting origin. He says:—

"A wealthy Palermitan noble owned a cook with an inventive genius. One day, in a rapture of culinary composition, this artist cook devised the farinaceous tubes which all love so well, and the succulent accessories of rich white sauce with grated parmesan.

"Having filled a large china bowl with this delicious compound, he set it before his lord—a gourmet of the first water—and stood by, in deferential attitude, to watch the effect of his experiment.

"The first mouthful elicited the ejaculation 'Cari!' idiomatically equivalent to 'Excellent' in English. After swallowing a second modicum he exclaimed, 'Ma cari!' or 'Excellent, indeed.'

"Presently, as the flavour of the toothsome dish grew upon him,

his enthusiasm increased, and he cried out, in a voice tremulous with joyful emotion, 'Ma, caroni! Ma, caroni!' or 'Indeed most supremely, sublimely, and superlatively excellent!'

"And, in paying this enthusiastic tribute to the merits of his cook's discovery, he unwittingly bestowed a name upon that admirable preparation that has stuck to it ever since."

The Italians attained an excellence in cookery before it was reached by any of their neighbours; the supremacy of modern French cookery owes its foundations to the Italian methods introduced at the French Court by the princesses of the family of De Medicis.

A dish eaten all over Northern Africa, from the Red Sea to the Atlantic, is Kuscoussoo; and it is prepared to-day as it was in the primitive centuries of long ago. It consists of wheaten flour, dusted on to drops of water, and mixed lightly and quickly by the hands of a woman, the mass of moistened particles growing gradually larger, the art of the operator being to cause it to granulate, and to prevent it from clotting. Each grain is only the size of a pinhead, and when enough has been formed, it is put into a conical basket of palmetto leaves, which is placed over an earthen pot containing boiling water, and cooked by the steam. The poor eat it alone, the wealthier class with meat. In the Book of Judges we read that Gideon used a pot and basket in his simple cookery.

Of course the farther we go back in time, and the farther afield we wander from home, the stranger the dishes we are likely to find. In the twelfth century the Norwegian (according to William of Malmesbury) ate raw fish, and to this day cured fish enter largely into his dietary. The modern Irishman eats the familiar potato, and is justified of his simple choice because he knows how to cook it. And let us not forget hospitable Ireland's greatest culinary triumph, odorous and appetising Irish stew.

No people are such gorgers of meat as the English, and no people know so little of the art of cooking vegetables, pulse, and roots. As seen elsewhere (p. 226), the ancients were adepts in the transmutation of vegetables into the semblance of animal food. But then, in those spacious times, the patrons of the gastric art were as great enthusiasts as its professors.

In this country the food of the peasant might easily be cheaper and better, while the provision of the artisan is almost always extravagant and bad. The one idea of the working classes in relation to improvement in diet, and which they invariably realise when wages are high, is an abundant supply of butcher's meat.

Among the average well-to-do middle class, who exhibit great indifference to cookery, there is a dreary monotony of diet; when questioned about it the reply invariably is, "We live very plainly; always roast and boiled."

The typical English housewife, devoid of culinary inventiveness, is always confident in the knowledge that at any moment she can fall back on butcher's meat, and that the plain joint, or the chops, or the steaks, will almost cook themselves. Certain it is that no country can produce primer meat; nowhere else can be seen finer steaks—slabs of juicy lean with a half-fringe of rich yellow fat; or finer chops—cut thick in the lean portion and tapered off with curly tails of fat. Or if this fat is objectionable to the individual taste, there is the famous "Barnsley chop," with its double thickness of the gravy-laden lean, and the flaps of fat carefully trimmed away from each end.

Is Welsh Rarebit, commonly called Welsh Rabbit, the national dish of Wales? "Toasted cheese hath no master," saith the proverb, and this homely dish

is simply made of toasted bread, covered with toasted cheese, smeared with mustard and pepper.

An amusing anecdote is that which relates how a boastful Welshman was bragging that when his father once entertained twelve guests he had twelve cooks to provide for them. "Ah!" was the rejoinder, "I suppose every man toasted his own cheese."

Christopher North dubs toasted cheese "the Welshman's delight or Davies' darling," and speaks of the thread of unbeaten gold, shining like gossamer-filaments, that may be pulled from its tough and "tenawcious" substance—a pretty piece of sentiment surely—"a divine sentiment extracted by the alchemy of genius from a Welsh Rabbit," he calls it himself. It is a dish the Scottish philosopher and his cronies frequently indulged in; on one occasion their conversation reminds them of its toothsome-ness. "Talking o' cats reminds me o' mice—and mice reminds ane o' toasted cheese!" and forthwith the order is given for a Welsh Rabbit.

A spurious ballad, from which the following lines are extracted, purports to exhibit the Welsh Rabbit as the national delicacy of the "wild Welsh."

"Jenny ap-Rice, hur could eat nothing nice.
A dainty Welsh Rabbit?—go toast hur a slice
Of cheese, if you please, which better agrees
With the tooth of poor Taffy than physic and fees.

A pound Jenny got, and brought to his cot
A prime double Gloster, all hot, piping hot!
Which being a bunny without any bones,
Was custard with mustard to Taffy ap-Jones."

And so on, through many verses, in the same burlesque strain.

Shakespeare makes a number of allusions to the Welshman's love of cheese, not the least pointed of which occurs in *The Merry Wives*: "I will rather

trust a Fleming with my butter than Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese."

But what is the position of Scotland in the tabulation of gastronomic achievements? Has the sister kingdom been maligned in the records of culinary history?

The *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1796 quotes a work written in 1670 purporting to give "the true character" of the people of Scotland, in which the assertion is made that in some parts of that country, when a feast is given, the diners "tie up a living cow in the middle of them, near a great fire," and then cut collops from the poor beast, and broil them on the fire, "till they have mangled her to pieces." It is entitled a "modern account"; in all probability it is a grossly libellous one.

According to a writer in *Blackwood* a century ago, no country in Europe had made less progress in the art of cooking than Scotland. Writing in 1817, he calls the Scots "a race of foul feeders." Among the dishes commonly met with at family dinners among the well-to-do, he mentions singed sheep's head, tripes, and beef-steaks and onions. No doubt the truly Doric dinners of North Britain are frequently of a composite character, as hotch potch, haggis, sheep's head broth, and black-puddings. If the repertory of dishes was restricted, it was due entirely to the poverty of the country. Scotland has become the "Land o' Cakes" simply because its stern climate has favoured the oat above all other cereals, and the Scots have naturally acquired a national fondness for their oatmeal bread, preferring it to wheaten bread—it is presented at every table, in thin triangular cakes, baked on a plate of iron called a girdle. To drag in Dr. Johnson's *jeu d'esprit* about their oaten food would be an insult to the reader, as its original delivery was to a virile people.

It may be surprising to learn that the haggis of Scotland, which in Dr. Johnson's day was vulgarly supposed to be incompatible with an Englishman's remaining at table, was a dish which every man in England affected in the time of the Commonwealth. In Markham's "English Housewife," published 1653, is a passage dealing with the use of oatmeal. After recipes for making oat-cakes and gruel, it says the same meal may be mixed with blood, and the liver of sheep, calf, or pig, thus making "that pudding which is called haggas, of whose goodness it is in vain to boast, because there is hardly to be found a man that does not affect them."

Dr. Johnson's definition of oats falls rather flat after this. Markham goes on to describe a food called Wash-brew, made of the very small oatmeal by frequent steeping of it, and then boiling it into a jelly, to be eaten with honey, wine, milk, or ale, according to taste. This is practically the same kind of "dainty for a weak stomach" as Sir Kenelm Digby describes under the name of Wheaten Flomery.

The *modus operandi* by which singed sheep's head is brought to table is thoroughly typical of a primitive community. The head is taken to a smithy, the wool is carefully singed off, first on the smith's fire, a rod being inserted in the nose, for facility in turning it over. It is then gone over with a red-hot bar of iron till every vestige of the wool is removed. Before it is cooked, the head is split through, and the brains removed. After being steeped in strong salt and water, it is carefully cleaned and put into a large soup-pot, with pearl barley, onions, cabbage, or kale, turnips and carrots cut up small, the latter sometimes grated. The soup thus made is excellent, and the head, with which the trotters are frequently boiled, is equally good. As the Shepherd in "Noctes Ambrosianæ" says :

“ There is a great deal of fine confused feeding in a singed sheep’s head.”

David Hume boasted how he could make “ sheep’s head broth in a manner that Mr. Keith speaks of for eight days after, and the Duc de Nivernois would bind himself apprentice to my lass to learn it ! ”

One philosopher has traced sheep’s head broth to an origin earlier than that of the black broth of Sparta. The Scottish dish, as a culinary preparation, is a work of high art, requiring two distinct performers, two different handicrafts, to bring it to perfection ; the brawny blacksmith, with his glowing iron, working harmoniously with the neater-handed cook, to produce a dainty tureenful, delicious to the palate and grateful to the stomach. The line of argument runs through the Arabs of Morocco, who from a most remote period sent their sheeps’ heads to the blacksmith to be singed, and afterwards made broth of them. “ There is reason to believe,” says this authority, “ that the sheep’s-head broth of the Gael excels that of the Spartan in antiquity, as it does in sapidity.”

Smollett savagely declares of this fish that it “ put me in mind of the history of Congo, in which I read of negroes’ heads sold publicly in the markets.”

Then there is minced collops, a dish common enough in Scotland, and which only the Scotch know how to make. Where there is such artistry there can be no shortcoming in conventionality. The charge of “ foul feeding ” implies a lack of culinary art.

Hotch potch in Scotland hardly justifies the original form of its name, “ hodge-pot,” signifying a jumble of ingredients ; for it is simply soup made with mutton or lamb cut in small pieces, with peas, carrots, turnips, and sometimes parsley and celery, and served with the meat in it. Elsewhere it is often made of fragments in the *pot-au-feu*.

As to the steak and onions which our "superior" critic contemns, it is one of Scotia's favourite dishes, and as cooked there is appetising enough to make the mouth of a mummy water. The steak must be cut from the rump of a polled Angus bullock or from a prime Highland stot; it is cooked, with the onions, on a brander (or gridiron); and to achieve perfection (as the Scottish housewife said to her expectant visitor, who was awaiting the results of her efforts), "you must have your fire as hot as hell, and turn eternally."

But Caledonia's greatest and most characteristic triumph in culinary science is the haggis, which is made in this wise. One of the stomachs of a sheep (the paunch), that into which the œsophagus opens, is cut off from the others, and thoroughly cleaned to whiteness. It is a bag with a small mouth. The heart, lungs, and liver of the sheep are minced small and put into the bag, mixed with minced suet, onions, salt, pepper, and some toasted oatmeal. The orifice is then closed and the bag with its contents boiled.

Properly made, it is excellent; badly prepared, it is nauseous.

Burns's poem "To a Haggis" begins:—

"Fair fa' your honest sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin' race!
Aboon them a' ye tak' your place,
 Painch, tripe, or thairm;
Weel are ye wordy of a grace
 As lang's my arm."

And so the immortal Scotsman sings its praises over French ragoût, olio, fricassée, and every other dish in the world, declaring that

"Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
 That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu' prayer,
 Gie her a haggis!"

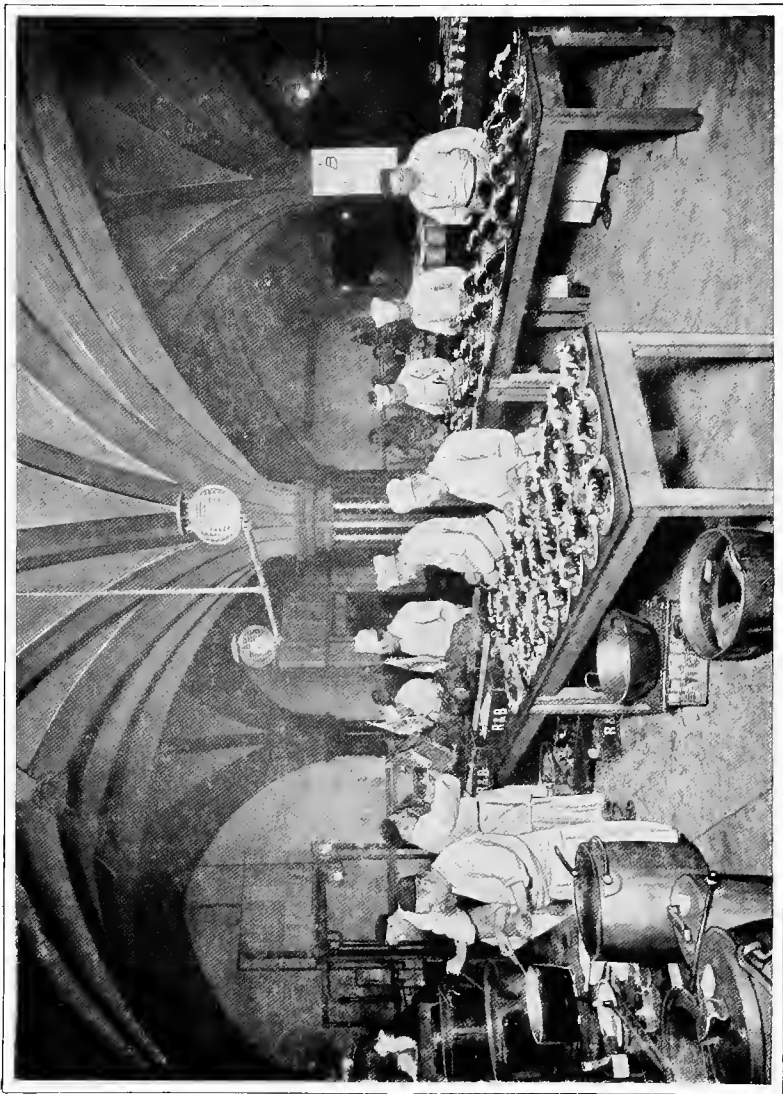
XXVI

INFLUENCE OF DIET ON NATIONAL CHARACTER

English and French voracity—Englishman's beef-and-pudding imperturbability—Soup-and-snail suavity of the French—Bloodless instincts of "orange-fed" Spaniards—An ill-fed nation's deficiencies—Dickens's lurid picture of Hunger stalking through France to kindle the Revolution—The German *friebank*—A potato diet—Tragedy of Irish famine—Waning energies of the Hollander—Starch-food diet unfitted for an enlightened race—A scientific diagnosis of the case—"Meat makes the man"—The Englishman, Frenchman, and Hollander contrasted—The Shakespearean philosophy that the eater of beef dulls his wit—The Professor's conclusion that man's spiritual powers need a peculiar kind of sustenance.

IN a treatise on diet Hippocrates contends that all men are born with the same mental capacity, and that the difference in mind which in after-life is discoverable amongst them is solely attributable to the quantity and quality of the food they have eaten. On the assumption that the metaphysical depends upon the physical, it has been argued that the national food forms the national character ; in proof of which have often been put forward the contrast between the smooth, slippery, volatile character of the soup-, snail-, and frog-eating Frenchman and the heavy, stolid, and imperturbable character of our own beef-and-pudding-eating countrymen.

A writer in *Household Words* once said : " Next to Habeas Corpus and the freedom of the Press



Photo]

CRYPT, GUILDHALL: PREPARING FOR BANQUET.

there are few things that the English people have a greater respect for and a livelier faith in than beef."

Both the English and the French eat too much. A recent writer says :—

"In the matter of food and drink the English people have a large and spacious imaginativeness, and in nothing does Dickens more faithfully reflect them than in his delightful dwelling upon meals. They revel in stories of hospitality and conviviality. They are a perfect Dumas père in their love of largeness and profusion. In these popular narrations there is always something large, farcical, and extravagant."

As to the effect of diet upon character, it is well known that in the old fighting days the Englishman always had a supreme contempt for the frog-eating Frenchman. It is related that at the attack on Cadiz the British officer in command shouted to his men : "You Englishmen who are fed on beef surely don't mean to be beaten by a lot of —— Spaniards fed on oranges !" A diet of frogs, or one of oranges, was altogether too bloodless to appeal to the fighting instincts of the brawny Englishman. "An army marches on its stomach," says the old proverb—and, of course, fights on it, too.

"Salad and eggs, and lighter fare,
Tune the Italian spark's guitar ;
And, if I take Dan Congreve right,
Pudding and beef make Britons fight,"

sings Matthew Prior.

According to Vauban, Bossuet, and the old-time philosophers, the richest and most comfortable nation is that which eats most meat.

An ill-fed nation can scarcely be a healthy one, and certainly it will be deficient in bodily strength and enterprise, whilst a sufficiently fed people, having

these characteristics in a high degree, will be able to acquire wealth, which may be regarded as the material foundation for the stability of an empire, and for influence among nations. The sufficiency of food acting upon the masses of the people may be regarded as the cause, not the consequence, of national greatness ; but in the diffusion of the blessings which flow from wealth it may be expected that the consequence may in its turn react as a cause.

Dickens has painted for us Hunger as the chief premonitory symptom of the greatest cataclysm that ever shook the foundations of society—the universal Hunger that stalked through France with muffled tread, stealthily assembling the tumbrils for the coming Revolution. He depicts it as a feature which furrowed every proletarian face among an oppressed and downtrodden people. Describing Paris, just before the Terror broke out, this lurid passage is to be found in his “ Tale of Two Cities :—

“ Hunger was pushed out of the tall houses, in the wretched clothing that hung upon poles and lines ; hunger was patched into them with straw and rag and wood and paper ; hunger was repeated in every fragment of the small modicum of firewood that the man sawed off ; hunger stared down from the smokeless chimneys, and started up from the filthy street that had no offal, among its refuse, of anything to eat. Hunger was the inscription on the bakers’ shelves, written in every small loaf of his scanty stock of bad bread ; at the sausage shop ; in every dead-dog preparation that was offered for sale ! Hunger rattled its dry bones among the roasting chestnuts in the turned cylinder ; hunger was shread into atomies in every farthing porringer of husky chips of potato, fried with some reluctant drops of oil.”

This is an eloquent description of a continental country a century and a half ago ; let us take a passing glimpse of another at the present day, where the dietary of at least a section of the people is of

the kind on which revolutionaries are usually nourished.

In Germany, where, owing to certain economic causes, flesh food is too dear to be within reach of the poor, a curious institution known as the Freibank exists. It is a municipal market at which is sold only meat that has been taken from diseased animals, or the flesh of injured animals that have been feverish, or meat that has been so diseased as to have required a prolonged process of scientific sterilisation. The work of this institution is philanthropic, and earnest sanitarians are engaged in it. The poor, it is found, will not refrain from eating flesh, and would certainly indulge in diseased meat and become diseased themselves if access to harmless meat were not offered to them at the Freibank. Hotels, restaurants, and sausage-makers are forbidden to buy at this remarkable institution, the working of which at Munich was fully described in the *Contemporary Review* of December, 1910.

About the time of the great Irish potato famine an eminent Dutch chemist, Professor Mulder, wrote a treatise on "Food, in its Relations to National Spirit," in which he has nothing but condemnation for "that ill-starred root" the "tragic potato." He maintains that of various aliments animal flesh, pulse, and cereal grains are amongst the most satisfactory, while rice, arrowroot, and, above all, potatoes, "cannot become a staple diet without the eaters not only dwindling in physical condition but growing more dull and torpid in intellectual, also, than befits an enlightened race."

To the great prevalence of the potato in peasant, nay, even in the smaller burgher, kitchens in Holland, Mulder does not hesitate to ascribe the chief share in producing what he declares to be a growing lumpishness and, so to speak, potato-mindedness in

the people—which to the ignorant, whose notions of Dutchmen have been gathered only from libellous proverbs and pert sayings current among their neighbours, will seem to be a nearly impossible catastrophe. It is, however, such alone who will laugh at Mulder's lament over the waning energies of the Hollander. Those who are conversant with his history—those, even, who can read the visible characters impressed on the strange kingdom which he has conquered from the waves, and maintains in despite of them—well know that, whatever he may now be, there was a time when, for patient courage, inflexible will, and an industry that nothing could daunt or weary, the man of the Low Countries had not his equal in Europe.

One phase of his case Professor Mulder puts rather neatly thus :—

“ Now, if that quantity of albumen which is absolutely necessary for the body is to be obtained from potatoes, the stomach must in that case be crammed with such a mass of this provender that it will act injuriously on the whole body. Experience does, indeed, teach us that it is possible to exist on potatoes alone ; but this, at all events, is no elastic, no healthy life. So distended, and blown up like a leathern bottle, a stomach that admits much useless matter, and gains from the mass but little that is of use to it, is in an unnatural condition. The bulk of the substance that daily fills the abdomen oppresses the nerves which are in close connexion with the brain. Voracious feeders are lumpish and somnolent ; and while, on the one hand, there are introduced into the body no strongly nutritive substances, abounding in materials of which the organism is especially composed—there is brought into the stomach, on the other hand, a quantity of profitless stuff *which imparts to the body all the properties of a voracious animal*, overloads the blood with useless matter, and stints it of that which it absolutely requires. Thus, he who eats largely of potatoes cannot, for the reasons given, be elastic ;—he receives at once both far too much and far too little.”

It may go against one's spiritual belief to set up the cook above Cato, and to believe that the

“divine particle” in man cannot resist, in the long run, the earthly influences of starch-producing roots taken as a chief article of diet. For to this we must come, if there be more than partial truth in the exhortations of Mulder. Meat makes the man, he says ; or if not this, at least, that you cannot keep the man up to the true pitch of his being unless you give him, not merely enough but the right kind of food—which amounts to pretty nearly the same thing.

Strange enough it is to see the revolutions whereby old notions come back to resume a foremost place in the speculations of modern philosophy. Who would have thought to meet with those popular fancies on the chapter of soup and beef-eating, immortalised by Hogarth in the “Gate of Calais”—in a serious treatise by a leader of modern science.

“The stouter diet of Englishmen, [says Mulder]—which may be partly a cause, partly the result of a more vigorous activity of the spiritual powers—is closely connected with the mental vigour of this nation ;—the French soup with the frivolity mirrored in these two—both equally vague—words *l'honneur et la gloire*, with which that nation is continually deluding itself. In our country the separatist is usually a hypochondriac : *strengthen his stomach*, give him fortifying nourishment, and *he will raise his spiritual views*, and demand the more vigorous sustenance of an invigorated mind.”

Here we have the philosopher of the nineteenth century enforcing the principle Shakespeare embodied in the wisdom of his Sir Andrew Aguecheeks and Toby Belches ! :—

“*Sir And.* Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has ! But I am a great eater of beef : and I believe that does harm to my wit.

Sir Toby. No question.

Sir And. An I thought that, I'd forswear it.”

We may be reluctant to admit the supreme virtue of victuals in the formation of a manly character, but our learned professor has no doubts whatever about the moral claims of the art of cookery. In conclusion, he repeats and emphasises his arguments—that with the organised body of man are intimately bound up his spiritual powers ; that civilised thinking men require a peculiar kind of sustenance ; and that in his rudest state of nature only does man, in common with the beasts of prey, enjoy his flesh diet raw. Maintaining his general thesis with learning and plausibility, Professor Mulder had not the slightest compunction in banning the potato from the dietary of the Irish peasant and the Dutch boor.

XXVII

CURIOSITIES OF DIET

Eccentricity and catholicity of taste—Ancient examples—Raw mutton—Sodden pork—Beans forbidden—Ostrich flesh compulsory—The puppy, young fox, and young hawk—The porpoise, seal, and *echinus* eaten—British oysters—Fattened snails—Crammed peacocks—Salted horse—Cats in jelly—Lizard broth—Thistles—Dumas's "Grand Dictionnaire de la Cuisine" Elephants' feet—And other fantastic dishes—Scottish dessert turnips—Broth seasoned with gold.

WHEN we dive into the byways of gastronomy we are not long in coming across all manner of gustatory eccentricities.

The gustatory sense in man when considered as a common attribute is remarkable for its all-embracing catholicity. There seems to have been little on the face of the earth, or in the waters under the earth, which at one time or other has not been regarded as desirable foodstuff. Equally curious is it to note how certain foods have, at various times and places, been banned as "unclean" or unfit for human consumption.

In olden times several animals not considered edible at the present day formed favourite dishes at the tables of our ancestors. The seal and the porpoise were choice *pièces de résistance*, and "The Forme of Cury" gives no less than five different recipes for cooking the latter. According to Warner

in his "Antique Culinary," it was even sold in the markets of most towns in Portugal in 1790.

The ancient Egyptians were gross feeders as far as meat was concerned, their flesh-fare including, not only beef and goose but raw mutton.

The heroes entertained by Odin in Valhalla passed the night in devouring huge junkets of sodden boar's flesh—in other words, boiled pork—for the Saxons, like the Romans, were great pork eaters. In the opinion of Galen, pork was the most nutritious of all meats, but he forbade it to the sick, as also beef; while mutton is a thing he proscribes even for the healthy and robust.

A prohibition which appears more strange in our eyes was that of Pythagoras, who forbade beans to his followers; and these as well as peas fell under Galen's condemnation. But Plutarch thinks that the prohibition of Pythagoras should be understood in a mystical sense to signify that they were not to meddle in politics, beans playing the part of the modern ballot-ball.

Although Galen denounced the flesh of the ostrich, Heliogabalus was so fond of the bird that he compelled the Jews of his dominions to eat it in spite of their law. And it is curious to reflect that although the quail is in much request at modern Italian tables, it was never eaten by the Romans of old.

Hippocrates equals the flesh of puppies to that of birds, and Galen praises the flesh of young foxes about autumn, when they have fed on grapes. The Romans ate the flesh of young hawks. In the matter of sea-fish the ancients ate many varieties not now regarded as edible, as the dog-fish, the star-fish, porpoises, seals, and even the sea hedgehog, or *echinus*.

As is well known, Britain had the honour to supply later Rome with oysters, which were fetched from

the vicinity of Sandwich. It has been said that he was a bold man who ate the first oyster. And truly, these things were largely a matter of prejudice—sometimes of national prejudice—as when we contemptuously call a Frenchman a frog-eater, and shudder visibly at his taste for snails, even though at the time we may be eating periwinkles with a pin. As the poet Gay hath it :—

“The man had sure a palate covered o’er
 With steel or brass, that on the rocky shore
 First ope’d the oozy oyster’s pearly coat
 And risked the living morsel down his throat.”

The elder Pliny tells us of a man who studied the art of fattening snails with paste so successfully that the shells of some of his snails would contain many quarts. In the degenerate days of Rome swine were fattened with whey and figs, and even the fish in the ponds were increased in size by artificial means. These latter-day Romans crammed peacocks, indulged a taste for prodigious goose-livers, and indeed gave way to many other forms of luxurious feeding.

Apparently, three centuries ago, snails were popular in England if they are not now. The fastidious author of “The Faerie Queene” gives a recipe for their preparation :—

“With our sharp weapons we shal thee fray
 And take the castill that thou lyst in ;
 We shal thee flay out of thy foule skin,
 And in a dish, with onyons and peper,
 We shal thee dresse with strong vynegars.”

The curiosities of diet are to be met with in all climes and in all ages of mankind. After the ratification of the treaty between the French and English at the termination of the siege of Leith, in 1560, the French commander invited the English commissioners

and officers to a banquet where, as Hollinshed narrates, "there were fortie dishes, and yet not one either of fish or flesh, saving one of powdered [*i.e.*, salted] horse."

In the matter of diet the Germans seem always to have had a strange taste. Don Anthony of Guevara, the chronicler of Charles V., inveighs bitterly against the German cooks. "I will tell no lie," exclaims the indignant courtier, "I saw such kinds of meat eaten, as are wont to be seen, but not eaten, as a roasted horse, a cat in jelly, little lizards in hot broth, frogs fried, and divers sorts of meat, which I never knew what they were till they were eaten. And, for God's sake, what is he that shall read my writing, and see what is commonly eaten at feasts, that it will not in a manner break his heart?"

A delicacy of the Italians in former times was the *cardo* (the thistle, with which was also included the artichoke), which was generally served with the fruit at the end of a dinner. The *cardo* was sometimes eaten with pepper and salt—with pepper, "because it will not generate wind, and clears the liver"—the popular belief being that because donkeys ate so largely of thistles was "the reason they had better stomachs than men." The "cardoon" is a most succulent and esculent vegetable which might find a welcome at English tables.

Alexandre Dumas the elder was not only a colossal gourmet but a gifted cook, who believed, like Frank Buckland the naturalist, that he had eaten everything that was eatable. Dumas wrote a "Grand Dictionnaire de la Cuisine" of nearly twelve hundred pages, and in that comprehensive work included recipes for dishes so exotic as elephants' feet, fillets of kangaroo meat, stuffed babirusa (the Borean wild hog), and Javanese kingfishers' nests.

Now to come a little nearer home for a few curious examples.

"I have seen," says one of our great eighteenth-century novelists, describing Scottish hospitality, "turnips make their appearance, not as a dessert, but by way of *hors d'œuvres*, or whets, as radishes are served up betwixt more substantial dishes in France and Italy; but it must be observed that the turnips of this country are as much superior in sweetness, delicacy, and flavour to those of England, as a musk-melon is to the stock of a common cabbage. They are small and conical, of a yellowish colour, with a very thin skin; and over and above their agreeable taste, are valuable for their anti-scorbutic quality."

In Scotland broth is, and always has been, held in high regard. But it may not be generally known that in olden times there existed a custom of putting gold into the broth for the sick, especially for consumptive patients.

XXVIII

VEGETARIANISM

A widespread cult—A religious observance—From a flesh diet to cookery—From cookery to disease—Ancient medical dietetics—Found detrimental to observance of fasts—And condemned by the early Fathers—Dr. Cheyne's experiment—A severe regimen—Reduced enormous bodily bulk—Restored health—And provoked a war of wit—English poets ranged against a sanguinary diet—Shelley's "Vindication of a Natural Diet"—Gay's pity for the victims of the shambles—Pope's strictures on "the leaden death" dealt out to innocent birds—Byron's revolt against gross English feeding—What a carnal diet has to answer for.

INCIDENTAL allusions to this interesting subject are compelled from time to time throughout these pages. Considering how great a portion of the world's population have always been practically vegetarians, that whole races and entire sects have been so on principle, the vastness and importance of the subject become at once apparent.

Vegetarianism has been claimed as part of the wisdom of the East. It may be said with equal truth to be a hygienic necessity of the tropics.

The Mosaic records tend to show that for more than sixteen centuries mankind subsisted on vegetable food alone. The ancient Greeks, till the days of Draco (620 B.C.), lived entirely on the fruits of the earth.

The pious Hindoo, following the tenets of Brah-

manism, holds the lives of animals sacred. The usual belief is that flesh-eating came into the world with the blood sacrifice. And with it came the art of cooking.

Even the austere Lycurgus, in inventing his famous *jus nigrum*, or black broth, did not rely wholly upon vegetables, but is said to have taken the entrails of the herd to serve as his foundation. "The black Lacedæmonian which the Spartan stirred with his spear" was not entirely devoid of meat essence.

With the advent of a flesh diet in place of the "kindly fruits of the earth," cookery became a necessary accomplishment of man. And cookery is a subject which has engaged the pens of clever men from Hippocrates to Alexis Soyer ; but away back in the deeps of time it is to be feared the practitioners were more skilful than scientific. Seneca was forced to make the observation that diseases multiplied in proportion to the number of cooks.

In the East, cookery very early divided itself into two branches—the science and the art ; one was the learned, occult, esoteric, initiated cookery of the physicians and the philosophers, now called dietetics ; the other was the vulgar, but exceedingly edifying, art which, though less discriminating, proved far more satisfactory, and consequently superseded the other in popular esteem.

In the fifth century St. Ambrose was highly indignant with these medical dietetics, and considered them the inferior system of cookery. As they "called men from fasting" he considered them contrary to Divine living. St. Bernard also shows his displeasure, complaining that these philosophers teach how such a thing hurts the eyes, this the head, that the stomach. "Pulse are windy, cheese offends the stomach, milk hurts the head, water the lungs ; whence it happens that in all the rivers, fields,

gardens, and markets, there is scarce to be any thing fitting for man to eat." A conclusion which, to the Holy Abbot, savours of ingratitude to a bountiful Providence. The bold appetite begotten of fasting is at least honest and natural.

The attitude towards dietetics taken up by Clement of Alexandria, the first great Christian writer and apologist, is somewhat sarcastic. Writing of ancient pagan sacrifices, he quotes the Greek poet who ridicules the practice and pretence of sacrificial propitiation :—

"The end of the loin,
The gall, the bones uneatable, they give
Alone to Heaven ; the rest themselves consume."

Upon which he quaintly remarks :—

"If, in fact, the savour is the special desire of the gods of the Greeks, should they not first deify the Cooks, and worship the Chimney itself, which is closer to the much prized savour ?"

And here we may leave the ancients. Modern practice and opinion may prove more weighty.

A notable experiment in vegetarianism was that made two centuries ago. Dr. George Cheyne, a physician of eminence in his day, was educated at Edinburgh, under the celebrated Dr. Pitcairne. He commenced to practise in London, where he changed his style of living from abstemiousness to one of epicurean indulgence, with the natural result that he became abnormally fat. He weighed thirty-two stone, and his enormous size compelled him to have the whole side of his carriage made to open in order to receive him. With increase of bulk came its usual concomitants—shortness of breath, habitual lethargy, and a crowd of nervous and scorbutic symptoms. Having vainly exhausted the powers of medicine, he determined to try a milk and vegetable diet. By a regular

adherence to this regimen he reduced his weight to almost a third, became strong, cheerful, active, and healthy, and, in fact, lived to a fair old age. A book he wrote on this treatment provoked the following epigram from one of the free-living doctors who criticised him :—

“Tell me from whom, fat-headed Scot,
 Thou didst thy system learn ;
 From Hippocrate thou hadst it not,
 Nor Celsus, nor Pitcairne.
 Suppose we own that milk is good
 And say the same of grass—
 The one for babes is only food,
 The other for an ass.”

To which Cheyne made reply :—

“My system, doctor, is my own,
 No tutor I pretend ;
 My blunders hurt myself alone,
 But yours your dearest friend.
 Were you to milk and straw confined
 Thrice happy might you be ;
 Perhaps you might regain your mind,
 And from your wit get free.”

A number of English poets, as might be expected from the temperamental inclinations and proclivities of the poetic mind, have either practised vegetarianism or ranged themselves among the opponents of a sanguinary diet.

The eccentric poet Shelley, having adopted a vegetarian diet, wrote a little prose work, “A Vindication of Natural Diet,” in favour of the practice of vegetarianism. Among his arguments he says :—

“The allegory of Adam and Eve eating of the tree of evil, and entailing upon posterity the wrath of God, admits of no other explanation than the disease and crime that have flowed from unnatural diet.

“The story of Prometheus,” he continues, “has never been satisfactorily explained. Prometheus stole fire from heaven and was chained for this crime to Mount Caucasus, where a vulture continually devoured his liver, that grew to meet its hunger. Hesiod says, that, before the time of Prometheus, mankind were exempt from suffering; that they enjoyed a vigorous youth and that death, when at length it came, approached like sleep, and gently closed their eyes. . . . Prometheus first taught the use of animal food, and of fire, with which to render it more digestible and pleasing to the taste. . . . Man,” he concludes, “resembles no carnivorous animal, being according to his intestinal arrangement, herbivorous”;

and the poet then forces home his argument by citing instances of horses, sheep, oxen, and even wood-pigeons, having been taught to live on flesh, till they have loathed their natural diet.

Other of our English poets have lamented the enormous flow of blood which man’s flesh-eating habits have poured out like water. Gay contemns the sanguinary diet :—

“Think how the glutton, man, devours ;
What bloody feasts regale his hours !

And in another passage he pictures the terrors suffered by the victims of the Shambles :—

“Against an elm a sheep was tied ;
The butcher’s knife in blood was dyed—
The patient flock, in silent fright
From far beheld the horrid sight.”

Pope’s lines descriptive of “sporting” scenes are equally severe :—

“See ! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings ;
Short is his joy ; he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground.”

And so he ranges, through all the victims of “the

leaden death," to a most pathetic climax in the couplet :—

“Oft, as the mounting larks their notes prepare,
They fall and leave their little lives in air.”

Byron revolted from the gross feeding of English banquets. English beef-eating is satirised by the Greek story of a Cretan who—

“Promoted breeding cattle
To make the Cretans bolder in battle ;
For we all know that English people are
Fed upon beef . . .
We know, too, they are very fond of war.”

The moral effect of meat-eating is said to be ferocity. Dogs of the chase are given more meat than other dogs. A dog fed on raw flesh is said to be fiercer than one fed on dressed food. A carnal diet has indeed much to answer for—and yet England remains the most carnivorous of all nations.

But let it not be imagined that all the English bards are on the same side.

“If all the world
Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream . . .
Th’ All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,”

sings the Puritan poet, Milton.

It has been recognised that there are steps on the way to the summit of dietetic reform, but that the step of most importance is that which leaves behind the “barbarism of slaughtering our fellow-beings.” The dreary monotony of a flesh fare may urge man in the direction of that step.

The enthusiastic zoophilist has long yearned for a new meat—has hoped, say, for the rescue of some neglected quadruped like the eland of South Africa,

or perhaps longed for the introduction into European kitchens of the reindeer of Labrador.

Our resources for the chief item in the bill of fare are miserably restricted to two animals—pork being generally omitted, notwithstanding the eloquence of Elia—and for the major part of the year to three or four birds. Fortunately, though the animals are only two, the meats are four; veal and lamb, in their season, being welcome changes from the beef and mutton. It is the genius of the cook to produce from this daily monotony of raw material the greatest possible variety in the finished article—the dish agreeably welcome in the novelty of its presentment.

Vegetarianism in itself has much to recommend it, but the cult fails to make wholesale conversions of the generous feeder, because it is too often associated with the eccentricities of the food-faddists—of the herbarians who try to get as near to grass-eating as possible; of the fruitarians, and other cranks who bar the way to a health-reform diet by ranting about “scorched corpse,” and employing other extravagances of language which repel rather than invite. And when they talk about vegetarianism enabling a man to live well on twopence a day, the economist is forced to remember that where a people do subsist at that rate wages generally fall to a “twopence a day” level.

XXIX

ANTHROPOPHAGY

Ogres and child-eaters—The Attacottian taste—A Sabbatarian Cannibal—A Triadic accusation—Persistent charges against the Scots—Crysten Cleek (1339)—The Ogre of Angus (1440)—Sawney Bean—"Sheriff broth"—A recipe for cooking human flesh—"Saracen pork," a curative dish—A human sacrifice demanded by hospitality—Civilised ceremonial of Aztec cannibalism—Criminals devoured in Sumatra as a punishment—Maori method of cooking a prisoner.

IN the matter of food, as in religion and politics, men have agreed to differ. How widely they differ is scarcely realised. It is difficult to conceive the grossness of taste which led the ancient to account asafœtida, the most nauseous of drugs, as a prime luxury, and to declare it a food fit for the gods.

A morbid desire for food has developed many revolting practices, and eccentricity of appetite may have been responsible for anthropophagy.

Cannibalism, unpleasant as the subject may be, cannot be altogether excluded from our consideration. Primitive man is supposed to have been very largely anthropophagous during the Bronze Period. All highly civilised nations have regarded the habitual man-eater with abhorrence; in fairy lore he always appears as an ogre, and in "Othello" we have the allusion to—

"The Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders."

Over and over again men have been driven by the stress of circumstances to eat their fellows ; and others, perfectly innocent of the practice, have acquired the reputation of being devourers of human flesh. It is well authenticated that the Conqueror's devastation of the northern counties was so severe as to drive the Saxons to this extremity, and the same dire extremity occurred at the overrunning of Ireland by the Bruces in the fourteenth century, when, according to the annals of Lough Cê, the people "used to eat one another throughout Erin." Similar evidence of a sickening nature is given against the distressed Irish at a later period by Edmund Spenser. During our interminable wars with France in the Middle Ages the French always stigmatised the English as "eaters of little children," no doubt pure calumny.

Does not Shakespeare, in the play of King John, hint at the barbarous practice of eating prisoners of war, in the line—

"What, shall our feast be kept with slaughtered men?"

Some old legendary custom among the horrors of war may possibly lurk behind these allusions to ogres and the propensity to eat captives.

St. Jerome, who visited Gaul in his youth, about the year 380, records how he learnt there that the Attacotti, the people of the country now called Scotland, when hunting in the woods, preferred the shepherd to his flocks, and chose only the most fleshy and delicate parts for eating. Which shows that even a saint is not above the retailing of a choice bit of gossip.

The earliest notice we have of the practice in this country may be a calumnious piece of history-making. In the old chronicles known as the Welsh

Triads the accusation is brought against Ethelfrith, King of England, that he encouraged cannibalism at his court, and that one Gwrgi, a truant Welshman there, became so enamoured of human flesh that he would eat no other. It was his custom, according to this mendacious chronicle, to have a male and a female Kymry killed for his own eating every day, except Saturday, when he slaughtered two of each in order to be spared the sin of breaking the Sabbath. This detail as to the Celt's piety gives an artistic finish to "an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative."

The credibility of these statements, which occur in the third series of the Triads, is not very high. This series has no higher antiquity than the fifteenth century, and, besides Gwrgi Garwlwyd (literally the Rough Grey Dog-man), implicates others in the same charge. Cannibalism is attributed not only to the degenerate Sabbatarian, but to two other vile and renegade Britons, through whose treachery the Kymry lost their land to the Saxons—Medrawd (Modred), a rival of King Arthur; and Aeddan, King of the Dalraiad Scots (sometimes called the Traitor of the North), who, in the year 577, fought at the Battle of Airdrie against the King of Strathclyde, in the last great effort of Druidism to resist the advances of Christianity. It is not surprising that the same questionable authority imputes cannibalism to Ethelfrith and the Angles of Northumbria; a Triadic statement which is very much weakened by a consideration of the fact that the memory of this Northumbrian king was justly hateful to the Welsh because of the many depredations he had committed upon them.

The charge of cannibalism brought against the inhabitants of old Scotland is somewhat persistent. Andrew Wyntoun has a grisly passage in his rhyming

chronicle regarding a man who was almost his contemporary. It was about the year 1339, when Scotland had been overrun by Edward III., and even its most fertile parts had been desolated.

“About Perth thare was the countrie
 Sae waste, that wonder wes to see;
 For intil well-great space thereby,
 Wes nother house left nor herb'ry.
 Of deer thare wes then sic foison [abundance]
 That they wold near come to the town.
 Sae great default was near that stead,
 That mony were in hunger dead.

A carle they said, was near thereby,
 That wold set settis [traps] commonly,
 Children and women for to slay,
 And swains that he might over-ta;
 And ate them all that he get might:
 Crysten Cleek till name be hight,
 That sa 'ry life continued he,
 While waste but folk was the countrie.”

That garrulous chronicler, Lindsay of Pittscottie, has a still more dismal story of the reign of James II., about 1440, a time of which this historian might almost have heard from living witnesses. He says:

“About this time there was ane brigand ta'en, with his hail family, who haunted a place in Angus. This mischievous man had ane execrable fashion, to tak all young men and children he could steal away quietly, and eat them, and the younger they were, esteemed them the more tender, and delicious. For the whilk cause and damnable abuse, he with his wife and bairns were all burnt, except one young wench a year old, wha was saved and brought to Dundee where she was brought up and fostered. And when she cam to a woman's years, she was condemned and burnt quick for that crime [her father was convicted]. When she was coming to the place of execution there gathered ane huge multitude—cursing her . . . to whom she turned about with an ireful countenance, saying, 'Wherefore chide ye with me? . . . Give me credence, and trow me, if ye had experience of eating men and women's flesh, ye wold think it so delicious that ye wold never forbear it again.'”

According to the history of Dundee this remarkable execution took place before the old Town House in the Seagate. In the words of the old chronicler :—

“So bot ony signe of repentance this vnhappy traitous died in the sight of the people.”

James Grant, in his novel “The Yellow Pirate,” makes use of this weird old legend of the “ogre of Angus.” Ewain Gavelrigg is described as a man of vast stature and frightful aspect, entirely clad in homespun grey, with rough deerskin shoes and galligaskins, a broad belt of cowhide encircling his waist, while his head, destitute of bonnet, was protected by a forest of matted black hair. A blow from his clenched fist was sufficient to brain a mountain bull or smite a charger to the earth ; those who escaped from him averred they saw him sucking the blood of those he had slain, and rending asunder their limbs like the branches of a withered bush, while he picked their bones as if they had been those of a chicken.

His haunt was a savage pass in the Sidlaw Hills, where he occupied a small hut, walled with turf and thatched with heather, and whence he way-laid, robbed, and slew solitary travellers. The novel tells how the vampire marauder was eventually slain, and how two wild, haggard-looking women, his wife and daughter, begged the body. Even then murders and mutilations did not cease, and children still mysteriously disappeared, till all Angus was stricken with consternation by the tidings that the wild man of the Sidlaws had come to life again. A crusade was then proclaimed, the hut in the lonely pass was destroyed and levelled, when in a vault beneath it was found an incredible quantity of human bones, while an unbearable odour of dead carrion pervaded the whole place. For all the other marvellous

happenings in this strange episode the reader is referred to the novel itself.

The most notorious cannibal who ever achieved the honour of having his life recorded was Sawney Bean, whose horrible exploits are given at length in Johnson's "Lives of the Highwaymen." This monster had his haunt on the Galloway shore, where, with the aid of a large family which he reared in a cave there, he is computed to have murdered and devoured not less than a thousand persons, men, women, and children, in the course of five-and-twenty years. As soon as he had robbed and murdered his victim, he carried off the carcass to his den, where it was cut into quarters, like a beast at the shambles, and some of the mangled limbs put into pickle.

At last an exploit of more than usual atrocity led to an organised hunt being undertaken for the capture of this bloodthirsty clan. King James I. led the expedition in person—it was during the lifetime of Elizabeth, ere he had ascended the throne of England—and it was with considerable difficulty that the awful cavern was located, its entrance being masked by the rocks and concealed by the tide. With the aid of torches, its intricate windings were explored, and the habitation of horrors stood at last revealed, reeking like a charnel-house. The captured monsters were taken under a strong guard to Edinburgh, and were all executed in a manner befitting the horrible nature of their offences, and characteristic of the savagery of the times. The work in which this disgusting chronicle of human depravity is preserved is a Birmingham-printed book of 1742, and the life of Sawney Bean is accompanied by a full-page engraving which shows the wretch at the entrance of his cave, standing sword in hand in front of a mutilated corpse, and his wife entering the cavern with a human leg, presumably to prepare it for the family consumption.

Yet another supposed case of cannibalism in the Northern Kingdom is said to have occurred at the death-feast of Melville, of Genbervie, the obnoxious sheriff of the Mearns, who, according to a certain written account, was "sodden and supped in broo" by some lawless Scottish barons. This story is generally taken by wary historians, as no doubt the feasters took their broth, *cum grano salis*.

There is, however, a recipe for cooking human flesh, and it is believed to be unique, the only one extant in any language. It occurs in the "Romance of Richard Cœur de Lion," where we are told that the lion-hearted King, when recovering from ague during the crusade, longed vehemently for a dish of boar's flesh. The "accursed father of bristles," as the Moslems term the hog, not being procurable on the plains of Palestine, the royal physicians were in a fix, as the King would not eat any other kind of meat, and animal food was considered essential to his recovery.

A sagacious old knight having been consulted, soon relieved them of their difficulty, by the following prescription:—

"Take a Saracen, young and fat,
In haste let the thief be slayne,
Opened, and his skin off flayne,
And sodded full hastily,
With powder and spicery
And saffron of good colour."

The old knight's advice was taken, and the King, believing it to be pork, made a hearty supper, and, after a sound sleep, awoke next morning perfectly recovered, and with a voracious appetite. But fancy the dismay of the cook when the King demanded for breakfast—

"The head of that ilk swine
That I of'ate."

After some hesitation, the whole truth had to be divulged to the warlike monarch, who, instead of being angry, rejoiced to discover the Saracens were such excellent food, as his army whenever in reach of the infidels need be in no more danger of famine.

Among Eastern nations exist a number of folk-myths, the ethical value of which is no doubt to teach the obligations of hospitality. Incidentally, however, they reveal vestiges of the lingering traditions of anthropophagy. Here is one of Servian origin :—

“A weary traveller called at the hut of a very poor man, and asked for food and shelter. ‘The forest will give us wood to make a fire,’ said the wife, ‘but meat we have none.’ The husband, after searching every corner, found a dry crust, which he offered his visitor. ‘Do you offer this to a traveller?’ he cried. ‘I want tender meat.’ ‘Alas!’ said the good man, ‘we have neither sheep nor goats. How can we give you meat?’ ‘You have a child which will provide me with meat.’ Upon hearing this the poor woman fell fainting to the ground; but the husband, horror-struck though he was, could not fail in hospitality, and after killing the child to provide for the wants of his visitor, went to bed with a relieved mind, and slept soundly. The traveller, however, was Christ; the child was not lost to them, and their hospitality was rewarded with flocks and herds.”

Similar legends occur in Thessaly and the neighbouring countries of the Near East. In Buddhist legendary literature recur many varying tales of the sacrifice of body or limbs for starving animals, or for the sole gratification of an enemy.

By the Aztecs of Mexico, a people, though singularly fierce and warlike, far advanced in the arts of civilisation, cannibalism was invested with great pomp. Prescott, the historian of the country, in his account of the Spanish Conquest, thus alludes to the practice, which was in essence perhaps an ancient hereditary custom practised as a religious ceremony :—

“The most loathsome part of the story—the manner in which the body of the sacrificed captive was disposed of—remains yet to be

told. It was delivered to the warrior who had taken him in battle, and by him, after being dressed, was served up in an entertainment to his friends. This was not the coarse repast of famished cannibals, but a banquet teeming with delicious beverages and delicate viands, prepared with art, and attended by both sexes, who, as we shall see hereafter, conducted themselves with all the decorum of civilised life. Surely never were refinement and the extreme of barbarism brought so closely into contact with each other."

In another passage Prescott depicts the sumptuousness and magnificent scale upon which the Aztecs gave their repasts, enumerating among the dishes they served meat, game, turkeys, vegetables of various kinds, and no stint of delicious fruits. The tables were ornamented with vases of silver and of gold, all of the most delicate workmanship. The drinking cups and spoons were of the same costly material, or of tortoiseshell. Their favourite beverage was chocolate, flavoured with vanilla and spices. They kept their meats warm with chafing dishes. Yet with all these accessories and refinements this people indulged in cannibalism in the form of an epicurean science. Indeed, one veracious chronicler of the Spanish Conquest mentions a *fricassée* or stew of little children, in which he vouches the Aztec Emperor sometimes indulged himself.

Sir Stamford Raffles has recorded that the Battas of Sumatra are habitual cannibals, which he thinks is the more extraordinary as they acknowledge a Supreme Being. Their laws regulate the eating of criminals and prisoners of war. This form of death is inflicted for adultery, midnight robbery, and treacherous attacks on a person, a house, or a village. The criminal, or prisoner, as the case may be, is tied to a stake and eaten alive, each person cutting off a slice according to taste or fancy, until all the flesh is devoured. Of all eating customs known this is pre-eminently the most revolting.

In quite recent times the Maoris of New Zealand were confirmed cannibals. An English sailor who, with a number of his comrades, was taken prisoner by these savages in the earlier part of last century, has described their customary method of feasting on their prisoners. He says that after the killing of his companions holes were dug in the ground, in which great wood fires were made, and a number of large stones made intensely hot therein. The cut-up bodies of the sailors were placed over the hot stones, upon which had first been scattered some green leaves, and over all were heaped more green leaves, the whole being covered in with a straw mat and well damped with water. This preparation took place in the evening. Next morning found the banquet "well cooked," says this horrible record.

Modern travellers still bring home tales of cannibal practices among the tribes remotest from civilisation.

Be sure the jocular Professor of the North pokes fun at anthropophagy, as he does at many serious subjects, and makes the Shepherd say: "When I was a lion there was naething unleonine about me. Noo, I could never bring my stamack to eat an auld woman. Girl, doubtless, was a delicacy once a fortnight—but girl every day would hae been——"

"Toujours perdrix," interjects Tickler. "Just sae," acquiesces the imperturbable Shepherd.

XXX

DIET AND HEALTH, TASTES AND TRAITS

Effects on health—Temperament—And imagination—Fish as a preventive of loquacity—Adder-eaters mute, but given to hissing—Stomachic peculiarities—Living by rule—Rules for the aged—And the sick—Benefits of plain and sparing diet—And light suppers—The hungry man dangerous—Obesity—Philosophy of fasting—What to avoid—Disastrous effects of over-indulgence—Pudding and beef for the fighting Briton—The human stomach—Gall—Spleen—Melancholy—Apple-pudding depression—Gentleness inspired by asparagus—Plague-disposing diet—Food antipathies—Tastes and diet of great men—Dryden's "vulgar stomach"—Tastes and peculiarities of Lamb—Swift—Pope—Johnson—Byron—Shelley—Newton.

DIET plays a larger part in the history of our lives, and, indeed, in the history of the world, than we are wont to recognise. It has been said that half the suicides, murders, heresies, false philosophies, and apostasies that have stained the annals of our race have had their origin remotely in a disordered stomach or liver, from the malassimilation of food.

"To a sound man sauces are needless; to one who is diseased they nourish, not him but his distemper; and presently the intemperance of his taste betrays him into the hands of Death."

Sydney Smith says: "Old friendships are destroyed by toasted cheese, and hard salted meat has led to suicide. Unpleasant feelings of the body produce corresponding sensations of the mind, and a

great scene of wretchedness is sketched out by a morsel of indigestible misguided food." It is related of Fuseli, the artist, that whenever he wished to add weird effects to any painting he had in hand, he invariably ate a hearty supper of pork chops to produce nightmare, from the distorted imaginings of which he derived his inspiration for the gruesome and the grotesque.

"'With Stupidity and sound Digestion' (says the satirical sage of 'Sartor Resartus') man may front much. But what, in these dull unimaginative days, are the terrors of conscience to the diseases of the liver? Not on Morality, but on Cookery, let us build our stronghold. There brandishing our frying-pan, as censor, let us offer sweet incense to the Devil, and live at ease on the fat things *he* has provided for his Elect."

It was held indisputable by the naturalists of the tenth and eleventh centuries that man's physical constitution and even his intellectual character were modified by his food. Ægidius de Monte says that the Church wisely enjoins the use of fish in Lent because that species of food *prohibet loquelam* ("prevents idle chattering")—fish being themselves proverbially mute. When Sir John Mandeville, therefore, heard of a people that ate serpents he concluded that they must have something of a reptile character.

"In the coundree of Yude the more, there is gret plentee of neddres [adders], of whom men maken gret festes, and eten hem at gret sollempnytees. And he that makethe ther a feste, be it never so costions, and have no neddres, he hath no thanke for his travaylle. ...Thei eten flesche of serpentis, and thei eten but litille, and thei speken nought, but *thei hissen as serpentes don.*"

Mandeville was, of course, the famous traveller of the fourteenth century—the same whose reported marvels included "the vegetable lamb" and "the anthropophagi and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders."

In matters of diet persons have individual peculiarities ; doctors encounter an infinity of stomach eccentricities, and it is an incontrovertible truth that is expressed in the old proverb, "What is one man's meat is another man's poison."

An ancient maxim says that whatever pleases the palate nourishes. Modern science has scarcely justified the philosopher who delivered himself of this axiom. Another school of thought puts forth the more discreet dictum that one should eat, if possible, of one kind of food only, or, at all events, eat of that dish first which is the most palatable.

But if one wanted to live by rule, there is no lack of advice for the guidance of those who wish to be led in matters gastronomical. The aged are advised to eat often, and little at a time, as weak and wasted bodies need the reparation of tissue to go on slowly and constantly ; they also are to give liquid food the preference to solid, inasmuch as it digests more easily and nourishes soonest.

"When struck in years strong drink forbear,
Especially of wine beware ;
Old men of moisture want supplies,
But wine of all sorts heats and dries."

It is an eighteenth-century mentor who rhymes his admonitions thus.

The sick are warned to eat less, not more, than usual ; they are admonished with the solemn caution, "The more you fill your foul bodies, the more you hurt them."

"To miss a meal sometimes is good,
It ventilates and cools the blood,
Gives Nature time to clean her streets
From filth and crudities of meats ;
For too much meat the bowels fur,
And fasting's Nature's scavenger."

A plain diet is, naturally, recommended for every one, and a sparing use of food is counselled at that.

“Accustom early in your youth
To lay embargo on your mouth,
And let no rarities invite
To pall and glut your appetite,
But check it always, and give o'er
With a desire of eating more ;
For where one dies of inanition,
A thousand perish by repletion.”

This old-fashioned philosophy may be sound, but it is much too cold to be comforting.

“Till hunger pinches never eat,
And then on plain, not spiced, meat.
Desist before you've eat your fill ;
Drink to dilute, but not to swill ;
So no ructations you will feel.”

Here, our mentor becoming coarse, we will honour his musty lucubrations with but one other quotation, and then no more of him :—

“Let supper little be, and light ;
But none makes always the best night—
It gives sweet sleep without a dream,
Leaves morning's mouth sweet, moist, and clean.”

Nobody doubts that luxurious living is detrimental to health, and that simple fare is the more beneficial to the body—indeed, that it is more strengthening to the mind.

A traveller in France relates that he took shelter one night among the Trappists, and says he “was conducted to the refectory, where was found a table spread with fruit, vegetables, bread, cheese, butter, honey and sweetmeats, good wine, and cider,” of which the courteous *hospitalier* pressed him to

partake. Here was truly the simple fare of the simple life.

A hungry man is an angry man, and an empty stomach has no conscience. To a demoralising hunger Shakespeare in "Coriolanus" ascribes the hero's failure :—

"He had not dined ;
The veins unfilled, our blood is cold, and then
We pout upon the morning, are apt
To give or to forgive; but when we have stuffed
These pipes and these conveyances of our blood
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
Than in our priest-like fasts."

"Let me have men about me that are fat," says Cæsar, "sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights. . . . Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look. . . . Such men are dangerous."

The connection between obesity and eating is perhaps less marked than between that complaint and self-indulgence in drinking; the subject need not be further pursued here than to note the fact that the removal of an excess of adipose tissue from a man has been accomplished by a surgical operation. The doctors tell us that the stomach is the most educable of the body's organs; and no one really doubts that, whether it be to stimulate a jaded appetite or to restore the balance of health in the opposite direction, nothing is eventually and permanently more efficacious than a severe system of dieting. The philosophy of fasting has been recognised in religious codes from the Mosaic dispensation to the austerities of Romanism.

As the man of forty is either a fool or a physician, the matured man of the world, sure of himself, knows what dishes to avoid. Lord Worcester was counselled by the great physician Sir Henry Hallford to avoid all made dishes. "Side dishes," said he, "are poison!" "Yours

may be," retorted his lordship, with sublime confidence, "and I should never dream of eating them; but mine are a very different story."

The well-dined man—the one who has dined wisely and not too well—has a sublime confidence in himself—

"Fate cannot harm me—I have dined to-day."

Dietetic influences are twofold—they have an effect on the character and conduct as well as on the bodily health. In estimating the latter, history informs us that we owe the deaths of at least two English monarchs to over-indulgence at the table—Henry I. from eating too freely of lampreys, and King John from a suicidal indulgence in peaches and new ale.

Had the great Napoleon not been compelled to leave the battlefield of Leipsic at a critical moment, owing to a severe attack of colic brought on by over-indulgence in one of his favourite but indigestible dishes, it is believed that tremendous conflict might have ended very differently.

The celebrated John Hunter said :—

"Some physiologists will have it that the stomach is a mill; others, that it is a fermenting-vat; others again, that it is a stew-pan; but in my opinion, gentlemen, it is neither a mill, nor a ferment-vat, nor a stew-pan; but a stomach, gentlemen, a stomach!"

Every one is said to possess the stomach he deserves, and there can be no doubt that our digestions are of our own making.

Ages before the study of human anatomy had developed into an exact science it was at least known that in some mysterious way or other a man's digestive organs had an appreciable influence on his temperament or character. All ill-temper or irascibility was supposed to originate in an overflow of the bile, and the man who exhibited it was

said to be full of choler (Greek, *cholē*, "bile"). Shakespeare describes Fluellen as "toucht with choler, hot as gunpowder." Melancholy was supposed to result from an overflow of black bile (Greek, *melan*, "black," and *chole*). Gall—that is, bile—likewise connotes ill-humour; thus Gibbon speaks of "the bitterness of religious gall." The root of the word is allied to *cholē*. The term "spleen," again, was employed to connote spite or ill-humour, because in ancient physiology this organ was supposed to be the seat of anger and melancholy. In the *Spectator* we read of the dull wretch who "excuses his dullness by complaining of the spleen."

The ancients were not so very far wrong in tracing a connection between a man's behaviour and his powers of digestion.

But surely it is not possible that a form of diet reflects itself in the countenance and demeanour of a man? That celebrated wit Sydney Smith once pretended that it did. Although a clergyman, his epicureanism was quite frank; it exhibited itself in a spirit of good-fellowship and that generous sympathy, which becomes the hospitable *bon vivant*.

"Luttrell came over for a day," he writes, "from whence I know not, but I thought not from good quarters; at least, he had not his usual soup-and-patti look. There was a forced smile upon his countenance which seemed to indicate plain roast and boiled, a sort of apple-pudding depression, as if he had been staying with a clergyman."

This anecdote very fairly represents the Rev. Sydney's style of humour as well as his dietetic standard.

The man cannot have a pure mind who refuses apple-dumplings, said one of Charles Lamb's acquaintances. Elia himself confessed that with the decay of his first innocence he had less relish for

innocuous cates, and that the whole vegetable tribe lost their gust for him, except only asparagus, a stick of which seemed to inspire gentle thoughts.

A curious Plague Pamphlet of the year 1665 cites certain articles of diet, among other predisposing influences, by which the pestilence was believed to be spread in London. As thus :—

“ Eating radishes, a cat catter wouling, a dinner of soales in Fish-street, a dish of french beans, eating the fat near the rump of a loyne of mutton and drinking cold beer immediately upon it, wetting the feet in a slip out of the boat by the waterside, an immoderate eating of caveare and anchoves, tame pigeons that flew up and down in an alley, drinking strong heady beer.”

Without being credulous, we may believe that infection has sometimes been conveyed in food. Diet, indeed, has much to do with health in a general way, and

“ There was a time when the body's members
Rebell'd against the belly.”

Antipathies to certain articles of food are as remarkable as they are unaccountable. Erasmus had such an aversion from fish that the smell of it threw him into a fever ; and his opponent in controversy, Joseph Scaliger, was always unable to drink milk. Cardan, the philosopher, and one of the most learned men of the sixteenth century, was sick at the sight of eggs ; and Ambrose Paré, the father of modern surgery, mentions a man who always fainted when he saw an eel. If an apple were shown to Chesne, secretary to Francis I., he bled at the nose ; and the list of such inexplicable aversions might be considerably extended.

The history of gastronomy is that of manners, if not of morals, says Mr. Abraham Hayward, in his “ Art of Dining ” ; and the learned are aware that

its literature is both amusing and instructive ; for it is replete with curious traits of character, and comparative views of society at different periods, as well as with striking anecdotes of remarkable men and women whose destinies have been strangely influenced by their epicurean tastes and habits.

Most readers feel themselves at home with the author who records what he had for dinner, or who speculates on the probable constituents of the next meal he will encounter. Wordsworth and Hazlitt once went for a day's walk among the hills ; they both noted their impressions, but while Wordsworth, as befitted so exalted a personage, never descends to details, Hazlitt's essay is infinitely more pleasant reading—it may have been outrageously carnal of him to note how the dinner was served by a buxom young woman, but it was intensely human. An interest in these things gives a zest to life.

To learn the tastes and the diet of great men, to know their likes and their dislikes, and the favourite dishes in which they indulged is to see their weakness as well as their greatness, and so to bring them nearer to ourselves.

Mæceras, according to Pliny, relished the meat of the foal of a tame donkey.

Dryden honestly liked the fitch of bacon better than more delicate fare ; as he said, he had “ a very vulgar stomach.” When Charles Lamb and his sister gave their little parties in the Temple they generally provided beef and porter, to which every guest, in the same spirit of unaffected simplicity, helped himself according to his fancy.

Yet Charles Lamb was an epicure in his eating as he was in his reading, and he considered cookery as one of the fine arts. To him eating and drinking were mental as well as physical enjoyments, for he ate with his brains as well as with his mouth. When

invited to dine with his friends he liked to know, as Swift did, the bill of the company as well as the bill of fare, for "good company makes good food, and there is no sauce like brain sauce."

Pope's physical feebleness compelled him to be extremely careful as to his regimen. "Two bites and a sup" more than his stint would cost him more suffering than most men would endure after a regular debauch. Yet he was fond of highly seasoned dishes, and liked his friends to send him delicacies. A dish of lampreys, though it invariably stung the Wasp of Twickenham, was one from which he was unable to refrain.

Dean Swift suffered from chronic indigestion, brought on, it is said, by a surfeit of fruit, though a more improbable cause could scarcely be assigned. It certainly had the effect of keeping him away from the excesses of the table, and his solitary meals in Dublin were of the most simple description; his repast was, often enough, mutton-pie and half a pint of wine, for example.

The author of "The Rambler" used to make inarticulate animal noises over his favourite food; it might be rude to designate them as grunts of satisfaction.

Byron had fits of intemperance, generally followed by a strict regimen of rice, vinegar, and water. He had a dread of getting fat, and always preferred simple food. On taking up his residence in Greece he left off all flesh food, and lived chiefly on toast, cheese, vegetables, olives, and light wine.

Shelley was careless about his meals, and never could understand why people wanted more than plain bread. His wife often sent food to his study, which he almost as frequently forgot to eat, and coming out of the room would, in his abstraction, inquire, "Mary, have I dined?"

Sir Isaac Newton was another who, in his pre-occupation, could not always remember whether he had dined or not. A friend once played a joke upon him by eating a chicken which was waiting for the philosopher and leaving the bones on the plate. When Newton came into the room he was quite unconscious of the fact that he had not dined, much to his friend's amusement.

The gustatory preference is sometimes strong in death. It is an historical fact that the last words of the great Pitt were not—as popular tradition delights to recount—"Oh! my country! How I leave my country!" but "I think I could eat one of Bellamy's mince-pies."

XXXI

FOOD ADULTERATION

Fastidious ignorance—Eighteenth-century adulteration—Town *v.* country supplies—The “tea-leafer”—Modern adulteration—And its handmaiden, Chemical Science.

FASTIDIOUS eaters should be entirely ignorant of the origin of the viands they consume, like the lady who preferred her milk from a nice clean shop, not from a dirty cow. This is the ignorance which gives peace of mind and protects from qualms ; also it encourages the food adulterator.

In the days of the powdered wig and brocaded coat the artificiality of town life was so marked that the eighteenth-century novelist is constrained to make his hero prefer the genuine delights of his country seat to the adulterated pleasures of his town house. In a letter to a friend he dwells quite lovingly on his many country comforts.

At his ancestral hall he drinks the virgin lymph, pure and crystalline, as it gushes from the rock, or the sparkling beverage, home-brewed from malt of his own making ; or he indulges in cider, which his own orchard affords, or in claret of the best growth, imported by himself. His bread, sweet and nourishing, is made from his own wheat, ground in his own mill, baked in his own oven. His table is, in a very large measure, furnished from his own land. He eats his own five-year-old mutton, mountain-fed,

and fit to vie with venison in juice and flavour ; his own delicious veal, which, fattened on nothing but the mother's milk, fills the dish with gravy ; his own barn-door-fed poultry, uncooped and therefore full-flavoured ; rabbits panting from the warren, game straight from the moors, and trout and salmon struggling from the stream ; oysters he gets direct from their native banks, herrings and other sea fish a few hours after they are taken. All his salads, roots, and pot-herbs are gathered fresh from his own garden, as are the good English fruits for his dessert. " My dairy," writes this enthusiastic country gentleman, " flows with nectareous tides of milk and cream, from whence we derive abundance of excellent butter, curds, and cheese ; and the refuse fattens my pigs that are destined for hams and bacon."

With these homely delights of country life he contrasts the supplies sent to his London table ; water, the mawkish contents of an open aqueduct ; wine balderdashed with cider, corn-spirit, and the juice of sloes ; bread composed of chalk, alum, and bone-ashes, which are whiter than the meal of corn, but unwholesome and deleterious ; veal bleached by repeated bleedings and other villainous arts till it is devoid of all taste, savour, and nourishment. And as the natural colour has been discharged from bread, butcher's meat, and poultry, so has the natural complexion been discharged from the pot-herbs, even to the hazard of the eaters' lives, stale greens being boiled with brass halfpence to improve their colour. The fish, having been brought a hundred miles or so by land carriage, often salutes the nose and turns the stomach ere it is placed on the table ; and as to oysters, though the right Colchester sort be kept in slime-pits occasionally overflowed by the sea, the green colour so much admired by the voluptuaries of the metropolis he

declares to be occasioned by the vitriolic scum which rises on the surface of the stagnant and stinking water.

And so he runs on, concluding a catalogue of London's almost unspeakable abominations with "beer guiltless of hops and malt"; and "butter manufactured from candle-grease and kitchen-stuff."

And in all this, be it remembered, the demon Adulteration had not then received the assistance of its modern handmaiden, Chemical Science.

A curious case of adulteration was revealed in evidence given in court a century ago, which discovered that many persons made a living by picking sloe-leaves and whitethorn-leaves in the fields near Camberwell, and selling them to a local cowkeeper for a penny a pound. One man said he picked from fifty to sixty pounds a day, and always found a market for them. The leaves were subsequently sold to a wholesale merchant, who could obtain as much as 8s. a pound for them under the guise of tea. The merchant was prosecuted and fined, not for adulteration, but for defrauding the Revenue. And the "tea-leafer" is still the slang name for the petty thief.

Adulteration is an ancient crime; and when it deteriorates the food of the people there is no greater iniquity. It is impossible for a man to be guilty of adulteration and remain an honest man. The serious evils which arise from such pernicious practices cannot be discussed here; they make for dishonesty, create widespread distrustfulness, lower commercial integrity, and, if generally prevalent, might lower the health and vitality of a whole nation.

Although the law takes cognisance of such delinquencies and imposes heavy penalties, the evil cannot be entirely eradicated. There is always with us a lurking suspicion of our bread being adulterated with

potatoes, and our butter with common fat. We know the ingenuity of the adulterator substitutes chicory for coffee, sloe or hawthorn-leaves for tea, water for milk, and starch for sugar. Our pepper may, for all we know, contain pea-flour and our mustard turmeric. It is common knowledge that there are cheap ingredients used to impart colour, smell, flavour, or pungency, or any other valued property as may be required.

The resources of science have been ransacked to cheapen and adulterate practically every foodstuff that is consumed in large quantities. This form of villainy has been practised to an extent that is scarcely credible ; in many cases it is only the expert or the analyst who can distinguish between the genuine and the sophisticated article.

XXXII

HOSPITALITY

Sacredness of hospitality—Stealing for a guest's support—Reciprocal hospitality—*Tessera hospitalis* of the Latins—Caligula's outrage on hospitality—Unsocial eating conventions—The entertainment—Consulting diverse tastes—The company—Select and not too numerous—Dinner dress—Precedence—"The chief seats"—Roman *lectus triclinarius*—Rule of precedence for Khans and Highland chiefs—A princely dismissal of guests—Medieval salt-vat—Above and below the salt—"Fun" and diversions at dinner—Processions—Tournaments—Souvenir gifts—Jocular dishes—Custard baths for jesters—A pretty Italian conceit—English hospitality discredited in eighteenth century—How to receive unwelcome guests—Overstrained politeness of vulgar hosts.

No obligation has been considered among the nations of the earth, from the ancient Greeks to the Arabs of the desert, more sacred and inviolable than that of hospitality. To be admitted to partake of a man's salt, to break bread with him, to go through any form of eating with him has everywhere entitled the guest, though he were elsewhere, and under other circumstances, the deadliest of foes, to the forbearance and protection of the host.

A Persian nobleman was sitting in his garden one day when a man prostrated himself before him and implored protection from the rabble. The nobleman gave him the remainder of a peach which he was eating, and when the incensed multitude arrived,

and declared that the man had slain the only son of the nobleman, the heartbroken father replied, "We have eaten together ; go in peace," and would not allow the murderer to be punished.

In the Europe of the Middle Ages hospitality flourished most when intercourse among men was least considerable. After the master of the house and the stranger, each with a foot on the opposite side of the threshold, had sworn that neither would harm the other, the sanctity of the hospitality was considered inviolate—indeed, it was no crime for the host to go out and steal for the support of the guest who had entered within his gates.

A Cochinchinese traveller who has not sufficient to defray his expenses at an inn enters the first house of the village he arrives at, where he waits for the hour of dinner, takes his part with the family, and goes away when he thinks proper, without speaking a word or any person asking him a single question.

It may not be out of place to mention here that pleasing custom of reciprocal hospitality between families which was fostered in ancient Greece. A mark or tally, generally of lead, was cut in halves ; one half was kept by the host, and the other by the person whom he had entertained. By means of this mark of hospitality regard was cemented and friendship established, which tended to make the hospitality not only reciprocal but hereditary. This mark or symbol was equivalent to the *tessera hospitalis* of the Latins. Even in this country travelling would have been difficult in olden times, indeed, almost impracticable, but for the habitual exercise of hospitality extended to all wayfarers.

Only a human monster could outrage the sacred laws of hospitality as did the Roman Emperor Caligula, who among his many mad freaks con-

structed a bridge of boats between Baiæ and Puteoli, a distance of three miles, and after covering it with earth built houses upon it. When it was finished he gave a splendid banquet in the middle of the bridge, and concluded the entertainment by throwing a number of his guests into the sea to drown.

But here it is not the moral aspect of hospitality which has to be considered so much as the methods by which it has displayed itself. No social convention, no form of courtesy, better established a good relationship between man and man than the invitation given by one, and the acceptance of it by the other, to eat together.

With us eating together is regarded as the highest mark of companionship. But eating customs vary greatly in different parts of the world. The caste customs of India are well known. The Maldivian islanders eat alone, so do the Otaheiteans; the former seemingly from some misanthropical reason, perhaps ideas of witchcraft. The latter, however, are naturally sociable. Yet at the hour of repast the members of each family divide—two brothers, two sisters, even husband and wife, father and mother place themselves at a distance of two or three yards from one another, turn their backs, and take their meals in profound silence. Such customs may not improbably have come down from the very earliest periods of society, when the savage, fearing that one stronger than himself might ravish his meal from him, concealed himself to eat.

The islanders of the Philippines, on the other hand, are so sociable that when one finds himself alone at mealtimes he runs until he meets with one to join him, and however keen his appetite may be, declines to satisfy it without a guest.

Among the American Red Indians the host is continually on the watch to solicit his guests to eat,

but touches nothing himself. In Kamschatka the height of hospitality consists in heating the cabin to an intolerable degree ; the meaning of this is said to be a test of the endurance to which the friendship between host and guest may be put.

In the making of a feast the greatest, if not the first, consideration concerns itself with the nature of the entertainment. In hospitality the will is the chief thing, said the ancients. There is "the feast of fat things," "the feast of reason with the flow of soul," and the perpetual feast of nectared sweets

"Where no crude surfeit reigns."

Small cheer and great welcome make a merry feast, says the poet. And every guest should be equally welcome.

"A feast not profuse but elegant ; more of salt [refinement] than of expense " was the etiquette of hospitality practised by the ancients and admired by Montaigne.

The true essentials of a feast, says Oliver Wendell Holmes, are only "fun and feed." The latter, after all, is an essential element, for no one can

"Cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast."

In the selection of dishes the most hospitable of hosts have sometimes failed to please, through labouring under the delusion that the viands they like best themselves are sure to win the approbation of their guests. It is well to remember that tastes are diverse—*chacun à son goût*. An anecdote of Scott describes the uneasiness of the company once assembled round his hospitable board at the approach of an overkept haunch of venison ; Sir Walter, who was fond of the dish, had very little sense of smell, and was entirely unconscious of anything wrong.

The first time Byron dined with Moore and Rogers at the table of the latter, his host was mortified to find there was nothing his noble guest could eat or drink, owing to his exaggerated dread of corpulency. He asked for biscuits and soda-water, but these had not been included in the menu; and eventually he made his dinner—and a hearty one—off potatoes and vinegar!

The eccentric dinner given by Dean Swift illustrates the sweet reasonableness of allowing the guest to suit his own taste.

The Dean on one occasion invited to dinner several of the first noblemen and gentlemen in Dublin, who, knowing his punctuality, assembled at the appointed time to a minute. A servant announced the dinner, and the Dean led the way to the dining-room. To each chair was a servant, a bottle of wine, a roll, and an inverted plate. On taking his seat the Dean desired his guests to arrange themselves according to their own ideas of precedence and fall to. The company were astonished to find the table without a dish or any provisions. The Lord Chancellor, who was present, said, "Mr. Dean, we do not see the joke." "Then I will show you," answered Swift, turning up his plate, under which was a half-crown and a bill of fare from a neighbouring tavern. "Here, sir," said he to his servant, "bring me a plate of goose." The company caught the idea, and each man sent his plate and half-crown.

Covers with anything that the appetites of the moment dictated soon appeared. The novelty, the peculiarity of the manner, and the unexpected circumstances altogether excited the plaudits of the noble guests, who declared themselves particularly gratified by the Dean's entertainment.

The Russians have a peculiar custom at dinner, which is without parallel in the rest of Europe.

The dishes and the wines are made to correspond in gradation with the rank and condition of the guests.

The arrangement of a menu is always a work of taste and nice discrimination. But in striving after novelty some recent efforts in this direction have been fanciful, not to say freakish. Suppose the hostess to be named Lavinia ; in arranging for the entertainment of a few of her lady friends, she will not only have her table decorations lavender, in keeping with her name, but will even strive after lavender-coloured food, as thus :—

Red Cabbage Soup.
Sole with Lavender Sauce.
Cutlets (with Mauve Frills).
Salad, Garnished with Fresh Violets.
Violet Soufflé. Prune Jelly.
Cheese Straws.
Lavender Ice.
Coffee.

The second consideration, if not, indeed, the first, is the company. Epicurus maintained that you should rather have regard to the company with whom you eat and drink than to what you eat and drink. This has been crystallised into the terse English proverb, "The company makes the feast."

Plutarch says : "Lucullus prided himself upon the luxury of his feasts. On one occasion, when he happened to sup alone, the meal being less magnificent than usual, he rebuked his servant, saying, 'Did you not know that this evening Lucullus sups with Lucullus?'" In this case the company was select—in every case it should be carefully selected. The harmony of the entertainment may be spoilt by one discordant note.

The elegant Romans declared that the company at a repast should not consist of less in number than

the Graces, nor of more than the Muses. The favourite number for a dinner-party was seven, and a fashionable Roman meeting a friend would regret his inability to invite him to dinner "because my number is complete."

Dr. William King, in his "Art of Cookery," says :—

"Crowd not your table ; let your number be
Not more than seven, and never less than three."

The great dramatist suggests six in the passage—

"Three and three, we'll hold a feast in great solemnity."

The solemnity of the dinner ceremonial, which is observed with the most elaborate of the day's gastronomical rituals, has demanded the donning of a special sacrificial robe—the dinner dress—the evening dress of modern society. It is due to a good dinner to approach it with reverence.

Among the Romans a special dress was worn at table, consisting of a loose robe of light texture, generally white, and differing altogether from the dress in use on other occasions. Cicero accused Valerius as if it were a crime that he had appeared at an entertainment dressed in black, although it was at the funeral of a lady, and compared him to a fury whose presence spread dismay among the assembly. The guests were sometimes supplied with these robes by the master of the house. The sandals were taken off lest they should soil the costly cushions, and the feet were covered with slippers, or not unfrequently left naked.

Precedence at table has always been a matter of delicacy and importance. Christ enforced His lesson on humility by allusion to those who "chose out the chief room" at a feast, as is recorded in St.

Luke xiv. The "chief places" at table to which our Lord thus alludes are those numbered 2, 5, and 8 in the diagram :—

ARRANGEMENT OF THE TRICLINAL DEPTH OR COUCHES
FOR THREE.

	6	5	4	
7	Medius.			3
8	Imus.		Summus.	2
9				1

The *lectus triclinarius* or dining-bed of the Romans was four or five feet high, arranged round a square table on three of its sides, the fourth being left open for the convenience of the servitors. These beds seem to have been introduced from Carthage and were unknown before the second Punic War, the Romans till then having been content with the plain wooden benches as were used by the heroes of Homer. For the ladies it did not at first seem consistent with their modesty to adopt the innovation, and it was not till the time of the Cæsars that they also took to the reclining position at meals. The youths, too, who had not yet put on the *toga virilis* were long kept to the ancient discipline; when allowed to come to table they sat on the edge of the beds of their nearest relatives. But gradually all simplicity gave way to extravagant luxuriousness. The beds in time came to be adorned with plates of silver, and covered with the softest mats and richest counterpanes. Heliogabalus had beds of solid silver, but Pompey went still further, and on his third triumph brought in beds of gold.

The seating of guests at table is always a nice

point, and one that has often caused considerable heart-burning. An anecdote is related of Macdonald, "Lord of the Isles," who, finding himself late at a vice-regal dinner in Dublin, sat himself down at the foot of the table, near the door. The Lord Lieutenant, upon observing this, invited him to sit beside him. "What says the carle?" asked the Scottish chieftain, who spoke but little English. On being told he was bidden to the head of the table, he replied, "Tell the carle that wherever the Macdonald sits, that's the head of the table." Many hosts and hostesses would be relieved to have the question of precedence settled in so ready and satisfactory a manner.

There are individuals, it will be seen, who, not being troubled by any disconcerting sense of modesty, make their own table of precedence and remain satisfied with it.

If we are to believe old travellers' tales, the Kham of the Tartars, who had not a house to dwell in, who subsisted by rapine, and lived on mare's milk and horseflesh, was wont every day after his repast to cause a herald to proclaim that "the Kham having dined, all other princes, potentates, and great ones of the earth may now go to dinner!"

A pleasant method of directing guests to their seats was that employed at the marriage of the Grand Constable of Naples in 1589. On the plates there were little figures of boys holding shields on which were emblazoned the arms of those invited. The elegance of an Italian banquet of the renaissance period was only exceeded by its costliness.

For the pleasant dispersal of guests what could be more royally conceived than that put into practice at the entertainment by the Cardinal of Ferrara to the Duke of Chartres in the sixteenth century? When the banquet, which had been of the most

sumptuous character, was concluded, a silver boat was brought in containing necklaces, bracelets, earrings, perfumed gloves, and valuable trinkets of various kinds. These were distributed to the ladies, and then four and twenty pipers commenced to play, escorting the company to their respective homes, accompanied by servants in gorgeous liveries and bearing torches.

As previously mentioned, it was a medieval custom in that period of boundless hospitality to mark the difference between the gentle and the simple at table by the position of the salt.

“Thou art a carle mean of degree,
Ye salte yt doth stande twain me and thee;
But an thou hadst been of ane gentyl strayne,
I would have bitten my gante again.”

The salt-vat, or salt-foot, was a massive piece of plate, and its use was common to England, Scotland, and France; in each country the distinction of seats in relation to its position was regarded as an important matter in table etiquette. When a man who had once sat below the salt was invited to a seat above it, that was an unequivocal recognition of his improved social status. This was noticed by our early dramatists. And one of our earliest satirists, Bishop Hall, makes the following allusion:—

“A gentle squire would gladly entertaine
Into his house some trencher chaplaine,
Some willing man that might instruct his sons,
And that would stand to good conditions:
First, that he lie upon the truckle bed
Whiles his young master lieth o'er his head;
Second, that he do on no default
Ever presume to sit above the salt.”

The salt-holder or salt-cellar (“cellar” is probably a corruption of *sall-er*) was of considerable size,

and came to be made of precious metal, not infrequently in some fanciful device as a ship, or a chariot on wheels, to enable it to be passed up and down the table. Salt-spoons were entirely unknown.

The wine most frequently circulated only above the salt, and the dishes below it were invariably of a coarser kind than those served at the top table.

The banquet having been decided upon, no problem has exercised the minds of the hospitably inclined more than that of the nature of the entertainment to be provided—the “fun” part of it, as “The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table” calls it.

The “diversion” sometimes accompanied the meal, as when minstrels in the gallery were wont to discourse sweet music; sometimes it followed immediately after the feast, forming an after-part to the entertainment.

In olden times banquets were not only expensive, but cumbrous in their ceremonial—the processions, to wit, which prolonged the time spent at table. As we have seen, the boar’s head was always brought in by a procession of domestics, and the peacock by a contingent of fair dames, because the peacock was “the food of lovers and the meat of lords.”

Edward III. dispensed a romantic hospitality, wherein eating and drinking were agreeably intermingled with tournaments and love-making; but it was under his successor, Richard II., that the magnificent prodigality of royal entertainments rose to its greatest height.

In those days of chivalry it was sometimes a costly business to entertain a few friends. They were not always merely content to eat and drink with their host; if the banquet partook of a ceremonial character, they expected to carry away some souvenir of a valuable and substantial character (as the Americans do at the present day). They looked

forward with a keen financial appetite to gifts of silver vessels from the table, or to special gifts such as falcons, or coats of mail, or goodly horses.

In the same rude age a heavy wit devised such preposterous things as jocular dishes for the entertainment of guests. According to "The Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth Cromwell," the most scurrilous of cookery-books, some dishes were formerly brought to table "more for sport than for belly timber." The animated pie of the nursery rhyme, with its "four and twenty blackbirds," was by no means an unknown dish. And most readers will recall that when Charles I. and his Queen were entertained by Buckingham at Burleigh-on-the-Hill, in 1630, the noted Court dwarf, Jeffrey Hudson, was presented to the Queen served in a pie.

A far more absurd method of setting on "some barren spectators to laugh," as Hamlet hath it, was sometimes practised at the city feasts of the sixteenth century. An immense vessel, broad and deep, was filled with custard and placed in the middle of the table. In the midst of the feast, when all the guests were busily engaged in discussing the viands, a jester would suddenly enter the room, and almost before any one was aware of his presence, would take a flying leap over their heads and plunge into the quivering mass of custard, to the intense amusement of all, except, of course, those near enough to be bespattered with the sticky mess.

Allusion to this silly conceit is made by Ben Jonson in "The Devil is an Ass":—

"He may perhaps, in tail of Sheriff's dinner,
Skip with a Rhime o' th' table from New Nothing,
And take his Almaine leap into a custard,
Shall make my Lady Mayoress and her sisters
Laugh all their hoods over their shoulders."

Did the host apologise to those of his unfortunate guests who suffered, in comfort or in costume, from this clownish piece of jocularitv? Was it accounted one of those "untoward incidents" which are, according to Horace, "wont to bring out the resources of the host"? Or was it argued that such buffoonery was at least preferable to the savagery by which, in an earlier age, that mad tyrant Caligula amused himself while taking his meals—the torturing to death of a satisfying number of his fellow-creatures? It is sometimes difficult to fathom the extravagances of which the human mind is capable.

Here is a pretty conceit for a grand entertainment invented by Cervio, the famous Italian authority of the sixteenth century :—

Several small tables should be placed together on strong tressels so as to form one long one, at which only ladies are to sit. Under the table is to be a trellis covered with odoriferous herbs, flowers, and fruits according to the season, forming a square in the centre of which is a tank filled with fishes, tortoises, and other swimming creatures. Grass is to be laid round the pond, with boughs stuck into it to represent trees, amongst which are to be rabbits, leverets, guinea-pigs, and various birds, tied with ribbons of divers colours, so that the garden may have a wild and animated appearance. To the trees are to be hung boxes of sugar-plums, nosegays, gloves, and other presents for the ladies, from the giver of the banquet. The tables, which are to be gilt and adorned with silk, are then to be covered with a very large, wide, and richly-embroidered table-cloth, which, falling on all sides to the ground, must conceal all that is beneath them. At the end of the repast the attendants shall quickly carry the tables away, lifting them over the heads of the ladies, taking care not to derange their head-dresses. The ladies will then find themselves beside the garden and lake, and each one will take a box of comfits, a small animal or bird, and a small net being handed to her, she can also, to her delight and amusement, catch the fish.

A Venetian traveller who visited England in the early Tudor period remarks on the peculiar, the almost incredible courtesy of the English towards strangers. The habit of feasting and being feasted



EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH KITCHEN

From Lebaul's "La Table et le Repas."

(By permission of M. Lucien Lavcur.)

—the dinners of parade which the modern satirist has ridiculed among the follies of vulgar ostentation—seems to have been then a part of the English character. This observer of our insular manners says : “ They think that no greater honour can be conferred or received than to invite others to eat with them, and they would sooner give five or six ducats to provide an entertainment for a person than a groat to assist him in any distress.”

Smollett, in his “*Humphry Clinker*,” compares the hospitality of the English, in the eighteenth century, very unfavourably with that of continental nations :—

“Certain it is [he says] we are generally looked on by foreigners as a people totally destitute of this virtue ; and I never was in any country abroad where I did not meet with persons of distinction who complained of having been inhospitably used in Great Britain. A gentleman of France, Italy, or Germany, who has entertained and lodged an Englishman at his house, when he afterwards meets with his guest in London, is asked to dinner at the ‘*Saracen’s Head*,’ the ‘*Turk’s Head*,’ the ‘*Boar’s Head*,’ or the ‘*Bear*,’ eats raw beef and butter, drinks execrable port, and is allowed to pay his share of the reckoning.”

The eighteenth-century manners of the English are not to be commended. Surely their hospitality, like their cookery, must have deteriorated.

Since that period, certainly, Englishmen have generally prided themselves on the heartiness of their welcome and the open-handed profusion which characterises their hospitality. Nor have the sister kingdoms been behindhand in winning encomiums for the same social virtues. Adam Sedgwick absolutely revelled in the abundance of Edinburgh breakfasts, and was supremely comfortable under the spell of Irish hospitality, as his memoirs declare. It is only on such happy occasions that the true wine of life is met with.

The art of entertaining unwelcome visitors, whose acquaintance is undesired, is also graphically portrayed by Smollett. According to this mirror of his age, even the dining-room, which is described as a large Gothic parlour, is chilly with its marble-paved floor and recently-lit fire ; everything presents an aspect that is purposely cheerless and comfortless. Then the repast is described as consisting of a parcel of kickshaws, contrived by a French cook, without one substantial article adapted to the satisfaction of an English appetite :—

“ The pottage was little better than bread soaked in dish-washings, lukewarm ; the ragouts looked as if they had been once eaten and half-digested ; the fricassees were involved in a nasty yellow poultice ; and the rotis were scorched and stinking, for the honour of the fumet ; the dessert consisted of faded fruit and iced froth ; the table beer was sour, the water foul, and the wine vapid ; but there was a parade of plate and china, and a powdered lackey stood behind every chair, except those of the master and mistress of the house, who were served by two valets dressed like gentlemen.”

Such was the welcome, *à la mode*, of the unwelcome !

On the other hand, the overstrained politeness of vulgar hospitality is trounced in the *Tatler*. The civility intended to make us easy is shown to fetter and trammel us. A few excerpts will expose the irksomeness of it all.

“ As soon as I entered the parlour they put me into the great chair that stood by a huge fire, and kept me there by force, until I was about stifled.”

“ In the meantime, the good lady whispered her eldest daughter, and slipped a key into her hand. The girl returned instantly with a beer-glass half full of *aqua mirabilis* and sirup of gillyflowers.”

Having been compelled against his inclination to drink it off,

“ when dinner was brought in, I had a mind to sit at a distance from the fire ; but they told me it was as much as my life was worth, and

set me with my back just against it. Although my appetite was quite gone I resolved to force down as much as I could, and desired the leg of a pullet.' 'Indeed, Mr. Bickerstaff,' says the lady, 'you must eat a wing to oblige me,' and so put a couple on my plate. I was persecuted at this rate during the whole meal."

And so on, till we are shown all the absurdities which proceed, not from an ill intention but from a wrong judgment of complaisance, and all the discomforts to which a guest may be subjected by wrong-headed hosts.

XXXIII

ARISTOLOGY

Art of dining—The accomplished host—Table talk—The diner-out—The intellectual feast—*Rationale* of the menu—The order of the dishes—Supernumerary courses—The appropriate wines—The *bon vivant* of the old school—His prodigality in wines—The coffee and tobacco—The dinner of parade.

ARISTOLOGY, or the art of dining, takes cognisance of the selection of the food, the skill with which it is prepared, and the tastefulness of the surroundings in which the meal is served. The philosophy of aristology also includes a knowledge of the main principles on which food should be selected in relation to nourishment and health, and has always sufficient acquaintance with the precepts of the kitchen to obviate any violence being done them. Such knowledge put to practical use may ensure the material success of a dinner.

The success of a dinner from the intellectual point of view depends on the giver's skill as a host, on the dexterity with which he assort and blends his guests, on the tact with which he affords each an opportunity of scintillating in his turn. A dinner of stilled herbs, with wise and witty talk, felicitously seasoned and genially mixed, is superior to anything ever prepared by a Soyer or served at the Carlton or Delmonico's. The breakfasts which were given by Rogers the banker-poet were as perfect in this respect as his dinners; delightful intellectual tourneys, with the

collision of quick imaginations, and the thrust, parry, and return of well-equipped minds—flashes of epigram, closely reasoned arguments, apt quotations, and happily-told tales, all blended in a stream of sparkling conversation.

The dinner which evaporates in whispers to next-door neighbours may be accounted a miserable failure.

The table should sparkle with wit—the guests should crack jokes as they crack the walnuts, and the fun should flow faster than the wine. A boisterous gaiety, however, is unseemly—as it has been neatly said, flashes of silence should punctuate the flashes of wit.

There are people, of course, who prefer to dine with those who “have good glass, good china, and plenty of servants”; but “there are others”—those who prefer companionable company to all the delicacies of the season, and a hostess like Madame Scarron, who made shift to satisfy her hungry guests and replace her missing *relevé* with “another story.” For this, after all, is the real art of entertaining.

The inveterate diner-out who is “worth his salt” is always an acquisition to the company—a bright, chirrupy creature who is never at a loss when the conversation flags, who is ready with some anecdote, reminiscence, or suggestive remark, which fans it immediately into flame again. Such were Tom Moore, the bard of Erin, and his equally amusing friend, Luttrell. The table talk which arrests the attention and gathers up the interest is generally that which is *apropos*, which is fitting to the time, place, or occasion; for instance, the two following Amphitryonic anecdotes are illuminative of the subject in hand:—

“Our first ‘good story’ is that of a man who asked another to come and dine off boiled beef and potatoes with him. ‘That I will,’ he

replies, 'and it's rather odd it should be exactly the same dinner I have at home myself—barring the beef.'

Here is the other story, which is of similar *motif*, but not of the same nationality :—

"A man about town having been asked repeatedly to dinner by one whom he knew to be but a shabby Amphitryon, went at last, and found the dinner so meagre and bad that he was scarcely able to eat a bit. When the dishes were being removed the host said, 'Well, now the ice is broken, I suppose you will ask me to dine with you some day.' 'Most willingly,' 'Name your day, then.' 'Aujourd'hui, par exemple,' answered the dinnerless guest."

The *ben trovato* round the table should rival in piquancy the gustatory delights upon it. In this spirit let us consider the somatic side of the dinner.

In the *rationale* of the menu, the soup comes first because it is aliment in a form 'which is most readily assimilated ; in a minute or two after taking a clear soup the feeling of exhaustion disappears, and any latent irritability soon begins to give way before a rising sense of good-fellowship round the table. The fish, generally easy of digestion, is well placed second. The third dish should consist of the chief meat, the joint if desired, for this is undoubtedly the place for it if a substantial meal is required. Then the chief nutritious supply having been afforded to the system, the more delicate dishes, eaten in smaller quantity, should follow in an order which makes one complementary of or introductory to the next.

If a joint is not presented, a substantial *entrée*—cutlets, or sweetbreads, or something of this nature, daintily cooked and well garnished—may be found acceptable. Next the well-roasted bird, game or poultry, accompanied or followed by a salad ; and after this (or, if preferred, before the roast) a dish of choice vegetables worthy of being served alone.

Then one light, simple sweet for those who take it, and a slight savoury or a morsel of cheese should complete the repast.

“Lo, as at English feasts, so I regret
The daintest last, to make the end most sweet.”

Shakespeare notes also that we prepare to make an end of the dinner when “there’s pippins and cheese to come.”

Dessert is a matter of individual taste. As to *hors d'œuvres*, an eminent authority is strongly of opinion that as a stimulant to the appetite they are unnatural and prejudicial. He makes one exception in favour of the oyster—a native production—“in itself a simple service of exquisite quality, brought to table with the attendant graces of mild and delicate vinegar or lemon-juice, brown bread and butter, and a glass of light Chablis for those who take it; the half-dozen natives occupying the hollow shells, and, bathed in their own liquor, hold rank of a very different kind to that of the miscellaneous assortment of tit-bits which are usually demanded by foreign gastronomic taste.” Any one endowed with a fairly keen appetite is independent of “whets”—the invention of idle men who have lunched too heavily.

There are persons of capricious appetite who could make a full meal of these adventitious appetisers; Rossini even found inspiration in them, for he composed a phantasy on the “Four Hors d'Œuvres” (butter, radishes, anchovies, and pickled gherkins), and, for the matter of that, a similar trifle on “Les Quatres Mendians” (almonds, raisins, figs, and filberts). The queer name of “the four beggars” was given to these four items of dessert because they were generally on the table when the members of the mendicant friars came in to beg

the remnants of the feast for the poor, perhaps aided by a fancied resemblance to the colours of the choir dresses of the respective orders—Dominican, Franciscan, Carmelite, and Augustinian.

By general gastronomic consent the usual order of wines at dinner is to offer a glass of light pale sherry or dry Sauterne after the soup ; a delicate Rhine wine if required after fish ; a glass of good Bordeaux with the joint of mutton ; the same, or dry Champagne, during the *entrées* ; the best of red wines, Bordeaux or Burgundy, with the roast game. With the dessert a full-flavoured but matured Champagne or a liqueur may be served.

This is the orthodox rule for a really good family meal. But the *bon vivant* does not restrict himself to so simple a list of dinner beverages as this. He will take Chablis with the oysters, sherry with soup, one glass of good Rhine wine with the fish, Champagne with the *entrées* and removes, a choice claret or Burgundy with the roast, and with the dessert will wind up with one glass of glorious port, "king of wines."

In the reign of Philistinism, which prevailed some seventy or eighty years ago, a host of the old school said to his guests at the outset of the dinner : " With the turtle there will be punch ; champagne and claret afterwards ; the two former I have ordered to be well iced. I shall permit no other wines, unless perchance a bottle or two of port, as I hold variety of wines to be a great mistake."

In the days when the port-wine decanter circulated freely, and the " three-bottle man " was yet in the land, it is related that a genial old soul, being surprised one evening in his armchair some two or three hours after dinner, apologised by saying, " When one is alone, the bottle does come round so often." Another jovial gentleman, being asked on

a precisely similar occasion, "What! have you finished all the three bottles without assistance?" answered cheerfully, "Oh! no! I had the assistance of a bottle of Madeira."

It must not be forgotten that both prudence and digestion dictate the wisdom of not mixing red and white wines, or indeed, any wines, at a meal. White wine should certainly never be taken after red. Whatever is drunk, however, should be of the choicest possible.

The termination of the meal is marked by the serving of coffee and the indulgence in a smoke. The value of the latter consists in the fact that with the first whiff of its fragrance the palate ceases to demand either food or wine.

With the smoke the power to appreciate good wine is lost. The use of coffee is almost symbolical of temperate habits; on the Continent, and particularly among the Mussulmans, the relationship between coffee and the cigarette or cigar is recognised to the fullest extent.

Although the canons of the correct dining code demand that the *relevé* must follow the fish, and the *rôt*, as the term plainly indicates, be a "roast," served after the *entrées*, the correct marshalling of the various dishes is often violated by dinner-givers; and under a fine parade of terms, *potages*, *poissons*, *relevés*, *entrées*, *rôts*, and so forth, the classification has not been strictly adopted.

Affectation and gastronomical humbug is displayed in that highly decorative style of serving dinners which includes such vanities as "rose-dyed *purées*" and the "flock" of miniature geese floating in a pond of green aspic jelly."

With more discernment—perhaps with a high pitch of refinement—the tendency now is towards the "little and good" rather than the profuse.

In criticising, or rather admiring, a fine dinner which had been exquisitely prepared and faultlessly served, a great man once said, "To do justice to the science and research of a dinner so served would require a knowledge of the art equal to that which produced it."

This chapter would perhaps be incomplete without the reminder that the confidences of the dinner-table are held to be inviolable—the Romans always placed a vase of roses in the centre of the table as the emblem of silence, to signify that what was heard *sub rosa* ("under the rose") was not to be lightly repeated elsewhere. Cupid gave Harpocrates (the god of silence) a rose, to bribe him not to betray the amours of Venus. For this reason the ceilings of banquet-rooms are sometimes decorated with roses, as at Haddon Hall, Derbyshire.



" A DOMESTIC SCENE "

From Radcliffe's "Domestic Cookery" (1823).

(Copy kindly lent by Frank Schloesser, Esq.)

XXXIV

THE ÆSTHETICS OF THE DINNER-TABLE

Eighteenth-century progress—Advent of earthenware and china—
The serviette—Adornment a zest to appetite—Sumptuous table
appointments—Ornate Italian and English examples—Exquisite
Majolica services—Old Venetian table glass—Epergnes—Table-
lamps—Table-cloths—Dining-table—Dining-chairs.

By the end of the eighteenth century, owing to the greater travelling facilities offered by the fast coaches, many domestic comforts and conveniences began to make their appearance in the homes of well-to-do townspeople. Wooden trenchers and bowls gave way to earthenware dishes, and china tea-things were seen everywhere. Some households boasted silver forks, but the usual kind were of steel, some having three tines and some only two. This pattern of fork could not very well be used for conveying to the mouth such viands as peas ; and so the table-knife which accompanied it always had a broad round end, which people found extremely handy for shovelling peas into the mouth, for catching up the gravy, or for performing those feats of table drill now regarded as vulgar. The simplicity of the table equipment less than a century ago is the paramount feature of the accompanying "Domestic Scene (1823)."

Although families making a claim to be regarded as polite used hand-bells with which to summon the

servants, plainer folk knocked on the table with the handle of their knives for that purpose.

The origin of the use of the dinner napkin, as we have seen (pp. 81 and 168), is lost in the murk of past centuries ; the calling of it by the French name, *serviette*, however, is a modern innovation. The word probably is a perversion of the Italian *salvieta*, "a napkin to save one's clothes from soiling." There are, of course, various ways of disposing one's *serviette*. It is related of Joseph, the famous chef, that seeing a gentleman seat himself at the restaurant table, and tuck the napkin well into his collar all round his neck, he went up to him and said, " Pardon, M'sieur, it is to dine with, not to be shaved ! "

The adornment of the table adds a zest to the appetite. At a banquet offered by Cardinal Campeggio to the Emperor Charles V., on his entry into Rome in 1536, the table was covered with four perfumed and richly embroidered table-cloths, upon which were placed twelve napkins of similar beauty. Between the courses at an Italian dinner of this period, the napkins, knives, forks, and spoons were changed, and perfumed water in silver-gilt basins was offered to the company to wash their hands.

At a magnificent banquet given by the Duke of Mantua in 1581, the table was sumptuously decorated, and so arranged on a dais of four steps that the twelve guests and their host sat with their backs to the wall, each occupying a large Spanish chair. No servants or other persons were allowed on the opposite side of the table, in order not to interrupt the view of a second table placed in the middle of the room, at which sat one hundred ladies of the greatest beauty, all most splendidly attired. Marvellously embossed silver basins were used for the perfumed water in which the diners washed their hands ; while the display of gold and silver plate, and of Venice

glass on the sideboard, could not be exceeded for magnificence in the whole world. A large supply of drinking glasses was necessary, as it was the custom for the ladies to break their glasses after they had drunk, to show they were in a gay and mirthful mood.

The noise caused by the conversation and laughter of these ladies was further increased by the music discoursed by four different bands, one in each corner of the noble hall in which the banquet was held.

An idea of the nature and quality of old English table decorations may be obtained from Hollingshead's description of the gala table, when Henry VIII. banqueted the French ambassadors, in the tenth year of his reign :—

“The King and his guests were served with two hundred and sixty dishes, and after that a *voidee* of spices, with sixty spice plates of silver and gilt, as great as men with ease might beare. This night the cupboard in the hall was of twelve stages, all plate of gold and no gilt plate.”

A “*voidee*” was a parting dish—the last course served. The cupboard of twelve stages was the table of degrees, described on p. 130.

Scott in his “*Kenilworth*” gives a description of the banqueting-room at Cumnor Hall, specially converted by London workmen from a dilapidated monastic apartment to the semblance of a royal palace. The new furniture included richly carved chairs of ebony, with cushions of sky-blue velvet corresponding with the hangings which clothed the walls. The floor was covered with a Spanish foot-cloth or carpet, exquisitely designed in glowing colours.

“The table, of old English oak, stood ready covered with the finest linen; and a large portable court-cupboard was placed with the leaves of its embossed folding-doors displayed, showing the

shelves within, decorated with a full display of plate and porcelain. In the midst of the table stood a salt-cellar of Italian workmanship—a beautiful and splendid piece of plate about two feet high, moulded into a representation of the giant Briareus, whose hundred hands of silver presented to the guests various sorts of spices or condiments, to season their food withal.”

Fortunes have been lavished on dinner and dessert services. Majolica ware was originally made by the Moors when they occupied Majorca, and it was exported into Italy thence, and also from the potteries of the Spanish Arabs. In the middle of the fifteenth century the Italians began to make this beautiful ware for themselves; the manufacturers of Faenza, Urbino, Castel-Durante, Gubbio, and Pesaro became famous for these iridescent plates. It is said that Raphael, when young, drew designs for this ware. At Gubbio, about 1498, flourished Maestro Giorgio, who had a monopoly of the famed ruby lustre, the secret of which is now lost. He improved the yellow lustre into the golden, and purified the ruby from its previous orange tone. Old Majolica plates and dishes are often adorned with classical or allegorical designs, the arms of Urbino, or the ducal coronets of the patrons for whom they were made.

Much could be said concerning table-glass and drinking vessels. Claret and Burgundy should be drunk out of counterfeited crystal air-bubbles, while ale should be imbibed from metal-lidded stone-ware. Tokay should be drunk from a fragile glass.

Old Venetian glass was seldom cut on the wheel, but given its beautiful curves by blowing only. Though thin, the vessels possessed extreme tenacity, and in the long, slender columns of their transparent stems appeared cross threads of an opaque milk-white colour (*latticeo*).

Sometimes these twine, like the roots of hyacinth

bulbs, through their transparent prison, as if they were growing tendrils ; and not infrequently the network of white threads is crossed by a lattice pattern (*vitro de trina*, or "lace glass"), and between each lozenge a little shining air-bubble has been artfully left. Then there is the *millefiori* (thousand flowers), when the glass is richly variegated with stars, circles, or other geometric figures, produced by mingling small cylindrical strips of various-coloured filigree glass, cut from thin rods, with the colourless melted glass of the mass. The *schmelze*, too, is beautiful, with its agate-like colours, variegated brown, green, or blue, which when seen by transmitted light assumes a deep blood-red tinge. More beautiful still is the *smelze-aventurine*, when patches or globules of gold vein the blue and brown surface of the *smelze*, while in the *aventurine*, in the melted glass of which levigated leaf of gold or metallic filings have been mixed, sparkles of gold are suspended in the glass. By "smelze" something like enamel is meant ; while "aventurine" is similar to what is known in the jewellery trade as "gold stone." Venetian glass sometimes is of smoky brown or has a blackish tinge which connoisseurs admire as the coffee-colour of old lace is admired.

The *epergne* is a highly necessary piece of table furniture, and should always be a work of art. Often enough, however, it is unmeaning and conventional in form, an article in plate or pottery, which has to be redeemed from deserved obscurity by a glowing mass of flowers ; but its presence is essential to the gourmet of thought, refinement, and taste, who wants his eyes between the courses, and during the lulls in conversation, to rest, not on mere plate, but on a production of the mind.

James I., who was always served on the knee, had the centre of his table ornamented with a "sur-

tout," a kind of epergne, pyramidal in form, which contained most costly vessels, and was even enriched with diamonds.

In the "sixties" of the last century the introduction of the dinner *à la Russe* was followed by the fashion of florid glass epergnes, towering and branching all over the centre of the table, till one half the guests were hidden from the other half, even though the dining-room were flooded by the glaring lights of unscreened gas-jets. The china bowls filled with roses which, in our grandfathers' generation, preceded these ornate ponderosities were infinitely preferable.

Now we turn their old-fashioned wine-coolers and decanter-stands into jardinières and sweetmeat dishes; old Georgian silver punch-bowls are used as centre-pieces, and antique silver candlesticks are converted into pillars for miniature electric table-lamps. Anything is better than the hideous centre-pieces of the early Victorian era. Sometimes, too, the bare board is revealed by using table-slips instead of table-cloths. The linen table-cloth came into use in this country at a very early period, and ancient drawings show the overhanging cloth knotted at the corners.

An expanse of white table-cloth is now generally avoided; it is broken up by flower-stands, comfit-dishes, and separate condiment holders, as small and numerous as possible—the heavy centre cruet has departed with the elephantine epergne—all of various shapes and sizes. Between these, flowers and foliage are laid to relieve any "spottiness" which might result from this method of laying the table. The menus, too, are, or should be, *en suite*.

Then it has been discovered that overhead light does not show up silver and crystal half so well as when concentrated downwards; so table illumina-



"A LITTLE SUPPER."

From an old French print.

tion is now effected by means of table-lamps or suspended electroliers, topped with soft silk umbrella shades. The shades may vary in shape and colour, but the whole of the decorations should, of course, be brought into one well-considered scheme of colour. The subject of modern table decoration is fully discussed in an illustrated and illuminative article in the *Art Journal* for 1891.

While the dining-table should be broad enough to carry everything that is necessary to its proper equipment and adornment, it should not be too wide to make converse across it in the least degree difficult.

A good dining-room chair should be substantial but portable, not cumbrous but secure; for comfort it should have a good back to give support, but free of those carved wooden ornaments which hurt the head or bore into the spine. The seat should be padded, and upholstered in leather for choice. An anecdote is related of a certain luxurious alderman who used always, at the end of the second course, to call for "a cold chair"; on his requirements in this direction being met, he fell to at the feast with renewed vigour and enjoyment.

XXXV

AT THE FESTIVE BOARD

Grace at meat—Illustrative anecdotes—The serving of the meal—Serving as the handmaiden of cookery—Its foresight, calculation, and intricacy—Tips and vails—A pernicious system—The carving—A famous official carver—The “scalco”—The amateur carver—His proficiency—Difficult carcass joints—Conversation—The punster at table—Old custom of jovial songs—Toast masters—Elaborate formula at London banquets—Anecdotes of toast-drinking.

WHEN we find ourselves seated round the hospitable table we observe that the procedure varies slightly as the table is that of a private friend or of a public function.

Grace at meat, the expression of gratitude to Providence for the blessings enjoyed at table, is an ancient Christian custom. As a practice it has come down from the early Church, evidently founded on the example set by St. Paul, of whom it is recorded in Acts xxvii., “. . . when he had spoken, took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all, and when he had broken it, began to eat.”

An attitude of mind more characteristic of classic paganism is expressed in “Feasts are too proud to give thanks to the gods.”

At the present day at public or private dinners, where the company is mixed and there is the least fear of hurting the religious susceptibilities of any

guest, the ceremony of grace is more honoured in the breach than the observance.

The germ of the modern grace, says the Gentle Elia, had its origin in the early times of the world and the hunter state of man, when dinners were precarious things, and a full meal was something more than a common blessing—when a bellyful was a windfall that looked like a special providence to be hailed by jubilation and songs of triumph. The jubilant has become the reverent and the devotional. In some houses where the grace is as indispensable as the napkin it is not always quite settled who is to say it, the good man of the house or the youngest child, the visitor clergyman or some other guest of gravity and authority, or some person to be called upon—an unseasonable uncertainty which gives the prelude to the meal an unbecoming awkwardness.

The devout Robbie Burns, who has left us enduring examples of his rhymed expressions of gratitude, was neat at an impromptu grace when called upon.

In the more recent past, when it was customary never to neglect this form of reverence, even at semi-private dinners, a diner-out who was a bit of a wag, when importuned for a grace, used to inquire, first slyly leering down the table, "Is there no clergyman here?" significantly adding, "Thank God!"

The serving of a meal is next in importance to the cooking of it. The old-time custom of honouring some of the chief joints with a procession had something to recommend it. But the same cannot be said for that piece of extravagant magnificence which marked the coronation feasts of the ancient kings of France, the newly crowned, when seated at the table, being served by his nobility on horseback.

"They also serve who only stand and wait,"

saith Milton.

Eating does not consist in putting cold, greasy animal food into one's mouth. Eating consists of putting into the mouth—chewing, enjoying the flavour, and swallowing, of course—warm, juicy, thinnish or thickish, fat or lean, morsels of properly prepared food, precisely at the nick of time. A minute too late, or five minutes too soon, it is cramming, but not eating. All of which depends on proper serving and good waiting. Good waiting is, practically, if not literally, the handmaiden of good cooking.

Efficient table service begins before the meal ; it concerns itself with artistically folded napkins, the provision of an adequate supply of glass and cutlery, and every other detail of table equipment and decoration. Proper foresight and careful calculation must enter into that unerring orderliness which characterises a correct service of the courses—*hors d'œuvres*, soup, fish, joints, sweets, coffees, liqueurs, and so on, throughout the menu—with the proper succession of knives, forks, and spoons, of plates and glasses, of the varying shapes and sizes appropriate to each, and all forthcoming at the moment required, silently, but without mistake, failure, or confusion. The intricacies of the waiting art are indeed many and subtle. The efficient waiter is conversant with all of them ; the perfect waiter is, moreover, alert, watchful, and prompt, and as impersonal as he is solicitously attentive.

The pernicious system of giving tips to waiters at public places need not be discussed here ; but the old system of vails to the servants at private residences cannot be passed over in silence. When this disgraceful practice was in vogue no guest could leave his host's table without having to satisfy the eager expectations of the menial crew. A man at one time could not dine with his father or nearest

relative unless he paid twice as much for his dinner as he would at the best tavern in town. The honour of making the first attack on this form of disguised blackmail must be credited to the principal gentlemen of the county of Aberdeen who, in 1759, held a meeting to consider the question. They passed a resolution declaring the practice "not only pernicious in respect to servants, but likewise a thing shameful, indecent in itself, and destructive to all real hospitality." They pledged themselves when visiting each other to give no money to servants, or allow their own servants to take money from guests.

The example was followed elsewhere, till the practice was effectively wiped out. Some day there will be a similar crusade against tipping in hotels and restaurants.

There is still an immense system of tipping in China. Every individual has to be tipped for every possible service. If one gives a dinner, the guests come attended by a retinue of servants, sometimes as many as twenty-five, and it is necessary for the host to tip every one of these servants.

In Japan the largest tip is given to the innkeeper; this is because inn tariffs are exceedingly low, by force of law.

There are dishes which need to be carved before they can be served, and not the least important functionary at a dinner is the carver. A celebrated carver was Vincenzo Cervio, who wrote "Trinciante" ("The Carver"), published at Venice in 1581. He was official carver to Cardinal Farnese, an office then considered a high and important one; and which in his case necessitated the employment of a number of assistants, the practice, at great banquets, being to have one carver to every six persons. These officials were men of good family, of good education, and

able to "anatomise" the joints on which they operated, and such as could uphold the reputation of their honourable office. Yet in all the noble and princely Italian households of that period there was an official who was superior to the carver. This was the Scalco, whose special duty was the general direction and control of all the other servants of the buffet and the kitchen, who selected the dishes, arranged the menu, and ordered the manner in which the dinner should be served. He was said to have the life and honour of his master in his hands—his life, as it was no uncommon thing then to put poison in the food of rivals in love or enemies in politics; his honour, as the honour of a great man was estimated by the magnificence and extravagance of his entertainments.

The day of the official carver has passed. But the expert amateur carver is generally sure of a warm welcome if his services are to be specially requisitioned.

The proficient carver's maxim is to "deal small and serve all." The good carver distributes his favours, the tit-bits of the joint, with discrimination if he knows his company, with impartiality if he does not. All tastes are not alike, but courtesy is due to every one. The efficient carver is never hurried or flustered, though the slow carver is a pest. Efficiency gives to carving the deliberation and accuracy of dissection; the perfect carver's work is one of graceful dexterity. Of large joints, portions of which are left over for consumption cold, a master carver never mars the fair proportions, to leave on the dish nothing but a shapeless ruin. A carcass joint should be sent up from the kitchen properly jointed; no kitchen is complete without a cleaver.

The carving of a haunch of venison, a saddle of mutton, or a grinning boar's head is a feat not to

be attempted by a novice. The art of carving calls not only for practice but for some sense of proportion and fitness ; and some diners who suffer from the absence of these qualifications would almost prefer to have the joint brought round in the olden style, so that with their own knives they could cut off the morsel their souls desire, instead of being served with the scraps usually sent from the buffet.

To cut warm joints fairly and smoothly, neither in slices that are too thick nor in such as are finically thin, is all that is required of a carver of meat, whether boiled or roasted. To fill up a plate with slobbery lumps is to undo all the efforts of the cook to present the meat in its most appetising form.

Carving takes time, and the polite diner lays down the knife and fork now and then, looks about him with a smile, and devotes the respite to agreeable conversation, badinage, repartee. As Pope says :--

"To the feast is joined
Discourse, the sweeter banquet of the mind."

Conversation, like carving, is a very desirable social accomplishment.

"Conversation is but carving :
Give no more to every guest
Than he's able to digest ;
Give him always of the prime,
And but little at a time ;
Give to all but just enough,
Let them neither starve nor stuff,
And that each may have his due,
Let your neighbour carve for you."

This is the dictum of Sir Walter Scott, no mean authority on either subject.

He who can set the table in a roar as that

merry wag Yorrick was wont to do, is generally a well-appreciated table companion.

The punster at the festive board may assist the digestion of those who can appreciate this form of wit. For instance, if he is sitting down to a table in a ravenous state, and is asked what style of cooking he prefers, very promptly he replies, "Hungarian!" Or, if there is any dish of which his palate so approves that he would fain have another serving, he will not agree that its style is French, or English, or Italian, or anything but—"Moorish!"

There was an old four-part song for male voices which, as an accompaniment to a good dinner, would at least raise a smile. It was entitled "Life is but a Melancholy Flower," and ran in this wise:—

Life is butter !
Melon !!
Cauliflower !!!
Life is but a melancholy flower !"

It is well to "prepare for mirth, for mirth becomes a feast," says the Bard of Avon.

Alexander Barclay (1570) states that our ancestors had a custom of singing jovial songs during the time of meals.

"When your fat dishes smoke upon your table
Then laude ye songs and balades magnifie
If they be merry, or written craftely
Ye clappe your hands and to the makinge harke.
And one say to another, lo! here a proper warke.

Spontaneity at table often gives way to formality—sometimes tedious formality.

The ancients had a custom of appointing at their feasts a "king" or "master," who was empowered to order how much each guest should drink, and whom all the company were bound to obey. He was

chosen from among themselves by the throwing of dice.

The modern representative of this functionary is the toastmaster at public banquets.

As master of the ceremonies at the big London banquets he is always a great feature in the evening's proceedings. He is invariably a man of good presence, and the possessor of a clear, ringing voice, and he generally uses an elaborate formula for introducing the various items on the programme. The toastmaster sprang into existence some time in the eighteenth century, and most probably the office was created in the ever-hospitable city of London.

"Part of the old City toastmaster's duties," we read, "necessitated his wearing a most portentous cocked hat, and a scarlet waistcoat richly faced with gold"; and we are reminded that it was in this glowing garb the father of Toole the actor spent his official life. It does not follow that a man who has to direct the ceremonial drinking of many others drinks too much himself; and therefore we can only accept as a caricature (as no doubt Dickens intended it) "Henry Beller, many years toastmaster at various corporation dinners," who appears as one of the interesting converts to temperance in "The Report of the Committee of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association." A capital anecdote is that preserved in *Notes and Queries* (1879), which tells that during the short-lived Peace of Amiens (1802) the chairman at one of the city banquets proposed the toast of "The Health of the Three Present Consuls," which the toastmaster took up in his stentorian accents, and by mistake or a happy inspiration translated into "The Health of the Three per cent. Consols!" The company, we are told, honoured the toast with great enthusiasm, and we can well believe it.

The formulæ used by different toastmasters vary ; some are more elaborate than others, but all have to be correct in a matter of precedence, such as "Your Excellency, My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, pray charge your glasses !" "This done" (says G. C. Maclean in an article on the subject) "the toastmaster announces the name of the person proposing the toast, and ultimately the name of the seconder. Altogether there is a fine sense of ceremony about the office of a toastmaster which imparts dignity to the functions at which he presides."

Toast-drinking, with its accompanying speech-making at public dinners, especially when the speakers are prosy and ineffective, is often enough a weariness to the flesh.

"Afflict us not, ye gods ! though sinners,
With many days like this, and dinners."

Public spirit, or at least corporate spirit, may be invigorated by such social functions. But the common fault of many public banquets is an undue lengthening of a formal toast list, which involves the consumption of too much wine, and really detracts from the pleasure of the earlier part of the proceedings.

XXXVI

FEASTS, HISTORIC OR NOTABLE

Belshazzar's feast—Festivity and Divine visitations—Anthony and Cleopatra's feasting—Sumptuous and magnificent profusion—A gorgeous French betrothal banquet—A brilliant company of courtiers—Twelve tables and seven elaborate services on 140 "goodly dishes of silver"—English royal banquets—Elizabeth's entertainment at Kenilworth (1573)—Westminster Hall and Coronation banquets—Duke of Wellington takes part in last ceremonial of the King's Champion (1821)—Civic banquets at Guildhall—Sumptuary laws *v.* luxury and gluttony—An episcopal enthronisation—"Warners" and "subtelties" at a Lenten feast—Wax Chandlers Company's frugal feast—A royal marriage feast (1612)—Last city feast of Charles I.—Costly banquet to George III.—Guildhall Chapel service to deprecate "indigestions and all plethoric evils"—Legal feasting at Inns of Court—"Eating their terms"—Profuse displays of former times—Public banquets—The Anti-benediction Dinner (1814)—Tory epicures—Whig gluttons—Colchester's Oyster Feast—Farnham Venison Dinner.

NO form of honouring worthy guests or special occasions, of commemorating notable events, of public rejoicing in its most expressive manifestation, has commanded more universal favour than the feast. The pages of history, ancient and modern, sacred and profane, abound with highly illustrative examples of this phase of human society, of man in his festive mood.

History records no royal feasting more tragic and terrifying than that of Belshazzar, at which appeared

the awful writing on the wall, during the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. Belshazzar, the last of the Babylonian monarchs, made a great entertainment for a thousand of his courtiers, and their wives and concubines. When excited with the wine he had drunk he ordered the gold and silver vessels taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem to be brought to the feast for himself and his courtiers to drink to the honour of their idols. During this impious act he, with horror, perceived as it were a man's finger writing upon the wall. Immediately the horror-struck King sent for his astrologers and diviners to expound to him the mysterious handwriting. When they failed he sent for the Hebrew prophet, Daniel, who thus interpreted the words that were written, namely: *Mene, Mene, tekel, upharsin*. "*Mene*," thundered the prophet, "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. *Tekel*, thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting. *Peres*, thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." And so it was fulfilled, for in that night was Belshazzar slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom. (*Upharsin* is a participle of the verb *peres*, signifying "and they divide.")

The turning of a festive gathering into one of terror and lamentation is a Divine device seen also in the Book of Job. Were not the children of the patriarch holding a feast on the day that a great wind caught the four corners of the house, and they all perished in the ruins? A greater effect is produced on the human mind by setting a calamity against a background of festivity.

The feasts given by Anthony and Cleopatra acquired the reputation of being as profuse as they were sumptuous. A young Greek visiting Alexandria found his way into the palace kitchen, where he saw, among a vast variety of things, eight wild boars

roasting whole at the same time. On inquiry as to the large numbers of guests for whom he supposed this great provision was being made, he was astonished when told there would not be more than ten. The household officer further informed him that it was necessary to be prepared to serve a boar in the highest degree of perfection at any moment, as Anthony would order his supper at one moment, and almost immediately afterwards forbid it to be served, having entered into a conversation that diverted him, for which reason it was usual to provide, not one but several suppers, so as to be prepared for any emergency.

A similar anecdote, by the way, is related of Napoleon. When the great Emperor was campaigning, his chef put down a chicken to roast every twenty minutes, for it was never known at what hour his Imperial Majesty would call for his dinner.

A more elaborate and fantastic table entertainment was never given than that at Tours, in 1458, to mark the affiancing of Gaston de Foix and Madame Magdalene of France, at which were present King Philip le Bel and the whole of his brilliant Court, including the princesses of the blood.

There were twelve banqueting-tables of great size. The service began with white hypocrass and toasts ; the second consisted of capons and gammons of bacon ; the third of swans, peacocks, bustards, herons, bitterns, and many other kinds of wild fowl ; stags, harts, wild goats, and venisons of various kinds ; each service of " a hundred and forty goodly dishes of silver."

"After which service, twelve men brought in (as an entre course) a castle, with four goodly towers at four corners, erected upon a rock. In the midst of the castle stood a great tower, in the form of a donjon, which had four windows, in each whereof was placed a beautiful lady, very richly apparelled. At other four windows

stood four gallant young boys, singing most sweetly before the presence. And, to speak truly, this entre course seemed a terrestrial paradise, for on the tops and pinnacles of the tower and donjon, were fixed the escutcheons and banners of France, richly painted and emblazoned in colours; as also the devices of Charles the Seventh, and the Order of the Star in white and carnation.

“The *fourth* service consisted of fowls, as well great as small, the whole being sumptuously gilded: and on each of the twelve tables were placed an hundred and forty silver dishes, according as in all the other services. After this service was brought in (for an entre course) the shape of a beast, called a tiger, which (by cunning art) disgorged fire from his mouth and nostrils. About his neck was a rich collar, whereat hung the arms and devices of the king, very costly and curiously fashioned. This entre course was carried by six men, each of them having a mandillon and bonnet, made after the fashion of Bearne; and they danced before the lords and ladies, according to the manner of the country; which moved much mirth and laughter, and this entre course was commended above all the rest, in regard of the new dancing.

“The *fifth* service was of pies, tarts, dishes of cream *oranges-adoes* and citrons confected; each of the twelve tables being served with an hundred and forty silver dishes. After the said service of sweets, was carried another entre course, which was a great hill or mountain, borne by four and twenty men. In the mountain stood two fair artificial fountains; from the one flowed abundantly white wine, and from the other red.”

After the sixth service of red hypocrass and wafers came another “entre course” of a man on horse-back,

“very artificially [artfully] made, attired in crimson velvet, but the whole consisting of goldsmith’s work. In the midst was a small garden, and therein stood a poet gathering all kinds of roses and other flowers, made of wax, which he presented to the ladies.”

Truly a pretty conceit.

The seventh service was of spiceries and confections, after which was carried round “a living peacock, and a goodly great ship.”

As “Favines Theatre of Honour” informs us, these were not the whole of the remarkable efforts put forth on this occasion to please the company; “con-

certs of singular voices, with all kinds of instruments " were performed on a platform which had been specially erected in the great hall of St. Julien, where the festivity was held. All this happened, it may be noted, at a period when the glories of ancient chivalry were decadent.

The famous entertainment given at Kenilworth by the Earl of Leicester to Queen Elizabeth in 1575 lasted seventeen days ; but it was more celebrated for its pageantry than for its feasting, though both were on a magnificent scale. A temporary bridge seventy feet in length spanned the valley to the great gate of the castle, and on each side stood columns hung with the offerings of the seven Grecian deities to her Majesty.

Sylvanus (divinity of the fields and forests) offered two cages of wild fowl ; Pomona (fruits) two great silver bowls filled with apples, pears, oranges, lemons, pomegranates, &c. ; Ceres (corn) presented two silver bowls with wheat, barley, oats, &c. ; Bacchus gave " two silver lyvery pots " filled with wine, and clusters of grapes, both red and white ; Neptune presented a large plate strewn with fresh grass, on which lay various kinds of sea fish ; and the list was completed by Mars with his weapons of war, and Phœbus with musical instruments of every description.

In this country the one existing building which, if its walls were able to speak, could recount the most marvellous tales of royal feasting, is Westminster Hall, in which for centuries the coronation banquets were held. In its original form it was large enough for Henry III., on the New Year's Day of 1236, to entertain six thousand poor men, women, and children. Westminster Hall, in its present form, was rebuilt by Richard II. in 1397.

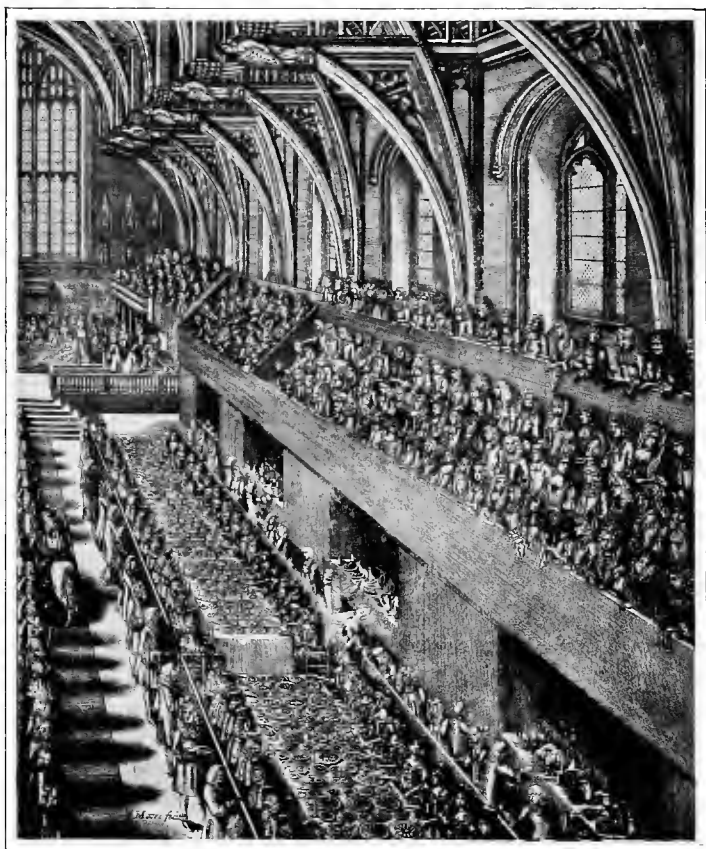
It was here, in 1170, the young Prince Henry was

crowned in his father's lifetime, upon which occasion the festal procession was truly regal, for "the King served his son at the table as server, bringing in the boar's head with trumpets before it."

At the coronation of Richard II. in 1377 Sir John Dymock, as successor to the Marmions in the office of King's Champion, rode into the hall armed to the teeth, and gave forth the customary challenge to all opposers of the monarch's title to the crown.

The last occasion on which this ceremony took place was at the coronation of George IV., July 19, 1821, when Henry Dymock went through this form of medieval pageantry. At the coronation of William and Mary in 1689, to the consternation of the company, the challenge was accepted by an unknown person—it is supposed by an expert swordsman in disguise—but he escaped from the hall quickly, and nothing further came of it.

In 1821, as soon as the King and his gorgeous cortège had arrived from the Abbey and taken their seats, the great doors at the end of the hall were flung open, clarions and trumpets sounded bravely, and three horsemen rode up the floor of the hall—the Duke of Wellington, as Lord High Constable, the Marquis of Anglesey, as Lord High Steward, and Lord Howard of Effingham, as Deputy Earl Marshal—followed by gentlemen bearing the first course. When the dishes had been placed on the table, the bearers retired with their faces towards the King, and then the noble horsemen retreated, backing their steeds down the hall and out at the archway. Before the dishes were uncovered the Lord Great Chamberlain presented the basin and ewer to bathe his Majesty's hands; the Lord of the Manor of Heydon attended with a rich towel. The dishes were then bared, and his Majesty was helped by the carvers to some soup.



CORONATION FEAST OF JAMES II.

From an old print.

At the end of this course the gates of the hall were again thrown open, and amidst another flourish of trumpets the Champion, clad in complete steel and mounted on a piebald charger, rode inside the dining-hall, holding a steel gauntlet in his hand. The "awful challenge" having been delivered, Mr. Dymock flung down the gauntlet with a clash. No one accepting the challenge, the heralds picked up the glove, delivered it to the squire, who kissed it, and handed it back to the Champion. This ceremony was repeated in the middle of the hall, and a third time at the foot of the royal dais. The King then drank the health of his gallant Champion, afterwards sending the cup to him, who in turn drank the royal health. The ancient ceremony concluded with the Champion gracefully backing his charger out of the hall amidst tumultuous cheering.

Hall gives a quaint account of a similar performance by "Sir Robert Dimmoke, Champion to the Kynge," when Henry VIII. and Queen Catherine of Aragon were crowned. The same old writer also tells how, at the procession of Queen Anne Boleyn, a fountain on Cornhill ran Rhenish wine, and a conduit in Cheap spouted claret. The streets were made to "run with wine" on such festive occasions in the olden times.

In a curious and elaborate folio work, entitled "The History of the Coronation of James II.," published by Royal command in 1687, a full account of the coronation feast, comprising a total of 1,445 dishes, is given, with references to a large engraving showing the disposition of these on the tables. Amongst them are cocks' combs, stags' tongues, cockles, spinage tails, periwinkles, crabs, egg-pies, quails, gammons of bacon, leverets, &c.

London's great civic feasts are held at the Guild-

hall, whose ancient kitchens suggest centuries of boundless hospitality.

“The first time (says Pennant) that Guildhall was used on festive occasions was by Sir John Shaw, goldsmith, knighted in the field of Bosworth.—After building the essentials of good kitchens and other offices, in the year 1500, this gentleman gave here the mayor’s feast, which before had been usually done in Grocer’s Hall. The bills of fare at length grew to such excess, that, in the time of Philip and Mary, a sumptuary law was made, to restrain the expense both of provisions and liveries; but the city did not long observe it, for in 1544 they thought proper to renew the order of council, by way of reminding their fellow-citizens of their relapse into luxury.

“In the enthronisation feast of Archbishop Wareham, on March 9, 1504, the first course was preceded by ‘a *warner*, conveyed upon a rounde boorde of viii. panes, with viii. toures embattled and made with flowres, standynge on every towre a bedil in his habite, with his staffe; and in the same boorde, first the kyng syttinge in his parliament, with his lordes about hym, in their robes; and Saint Wylliam, like an archbishop, sytting on the ryght hand of the kyng; then the Chaunceller of Oxforde, with other doctors about hym, presented the said Lord Wylliam, kneelyng, in a doctor’s habite, unto the kyng, with his commend of vertue and cunnyng, &c. And on the third boorde of the same warner, the Holy Ghoste appeared with bright beames, proceeding from hym of the gyftes of grace towarde the sayde lorde of the feaste.’ This was a specimen of the ancient sotelties, and was given at a *Lenten* feast of the most luxurious kind. The sotelties were suited to the occasion, and of an historical or legendary nature, contrived ‘with great cunnyng.’”

A “warner” was a preliminary course—a prelude to another dish.

“To these scenes of luxury and gluttony, let me oppose [continues Pennant] the simple fare at a feast of the Wax-chandlers, on October the 28th, 1478. These were a flourishing company in the days of old, when gratitude to saints called so frequently for lights. How many thousands of wax-candles were consumed on these occasions, and what quantities the expiatory offerings of private persons, non can enumerate. *Candle-mass* day wasted its thousands, and these all blessed by the priests, and adjured in solemn terms. ‘I adjure thee, O waxen creature, that thou repel the devil and his sprights.’

"Certainly this company, which was incorporated in 1484, might have afforded a more delicate feast than 'Two loins of mutton, two loins of veal, a loin of beef, a leg of mutton, a pig, a capon, a coney, one dozen of pigeons, a hundred of eggs, a goose, a gallon of red wine, and a kilderkin of ale, which cost *seven shillings*.'

"Among the great feasts given on public occasions, may be reckoned that given in 1612, on occasion of the unhappy marriage of the Prince Palatine with Elizabeth, daughter of James I., who, in defiance of the remonstrance of his better-judging father-in-law, rushed on the usurpation of the dominion of another, and brought great misery on himself and his amiable spouse. The next was in 1641, when Charles I. returned from his imprudent, inefficacious journey into Scotland. In the midst of the most factious and turbulent times, when every engine was set to work to annihilate the regal power, the city, under its Lord Mayor, Sir William Acton, made a feast unparalleled in history for its magnificence. All external respect was paid to his majesty, the last he ever experienced in the inflamed city. Of the entertainment we know no more than that it consisted of five hundred dishes. The sotelties were the ornamental part of the dessert.

"The whole of the entertainment given to their majesties, George III. and Queen Charlotte, in 1761, cost the city £6,898 5s. 4d. The feast consisted of 414 dishes, besides the dessert. The king and queen viewed the inaugural procession from the windows of Mr. Barclay, a linendraper, in Cheapside.

"Adjacent to Guildhall was, formerly Guildhall chapel, or college, a Gothic building, founded by Peter Fanlove, Adam Francis, and Henry Frowick, citizens, about the year 1299. The establishment was a warden, seven priests, three clerks, and four choristers. Edward VI. granted it to the mayor and commonalty of the city of London. Here used to be service once a week, and also at the election of the mayor, and before the mayor's feast, to deprecate *indigestions* and *all plethoric evils*."

The festive proclivities of the legal profession must not be overlooked. Does not the legal neophyte almost literally eat his way to the bar? Doctors' Commons was so called because the doctors of the civil law had to dine together four days in each term—to "common" means to dine together—and this was called "eating their terms." The Inns of Court have witnessed not a few magnificent spreads.

Dr. Chamberlayne, in the fifteenth edition of his "Notitia Angliæ" (1684), says :—

"Feasting is not so common and profuse as anciently; for although the feasts of coronations, at installations of Knights of the Garter, consecration of Bishops, (both now laid aside) entertainments of ambassadors, the feasts of the Lord Mayor of London, of Sergeants at Law and Readers' feasts in the Inns of Court, (also laid aside) are all very sumptuous and magnificent in these times, yet compared to the feasts of our ancestors, seem to be but niggardly and sparing; for Richard Earl of Cornwall, brother to Henry III. had at his marriage feast, as is recorded, thirty thousand dishes of meal, and King Richard II. at a Christmas feast, spent daily twenty-six oxen, three hundred sheep, besides fowl, and all other provision proportionably; so anciently at a call of Sergeants at Law, each serjeant (says Fortescue) spent sixteen hundred crowns in feasting, which in those days was more than sixteen hundred pounds now."

In the history of public banquets, the one given to Lord Grey, in Scotland, at a great "Reform" demonstration, has the peculiar distinction of being dubbed the "Anti-benediction Dinner." It took place on September 15, 1834, in a vast wooden pavilion erected in the area of the Edinburgh High School, from the centre of the roof of which was dependent the great lustre from the Theatre Royal, to which a special "conduit" of gas had been laid on—quite an achievement in those days—with the result that the pavilion is admiringly described by one journal as a veritable "fairly palace."

The dinner (says the *Annual Register*) being a cold one, and therefore already laid on the tables, offered an irresistible temptation to the persons admitted; for as soon as they were seated, and long before the appearance of the chairman, there arose an almost universal clatter of knives and forks, and a general demolition of the eatables was vigorously commenced. This proceeding elicited some disapprobation. Hisses arose from different parts of the

room, and a gentleman having ascended one of the tables entreated the company to desist from mastication until the chairman had taken his place. But his appeal was fruitless, at least to the majority of his auditors; on went the work of demolition, and, in fact, by the time the chair was taken and the dinner regularly commenced the eating was over. The appearance of the room when the whole company had taken their places was very imposing, says the same reporter. On the platform, besides the great guest of the festival, were Lord Brougham, Lord Rosebery, the Earl of Errol, Lord Lynedock, Lord Belhaven, Lord Durham, Sir J. C. Hobhouse, Professor Arago, the Solicitor-General, Sir J. Abercromby, the Marquis of Breadalbane, Lord Stair, &c., &c. Lord Rosebery took the chair in the absence of the Duke of Hamilton, who had excused himself from attending. The Lord Advocate (Jeffrey) was croupier, supported by Lord Dinorben and the Attorney-General.

At the unseemliness which was displayed upon this occasion the public were not unnaturally shocked, especially as the offenders were Scotsmen; and not a little capital was made out of it by the contrasting of the irreproachable manners of "Tory epicures" with "these wretched Whig gluttons" who had so scandalised the "unco' guid" and discredited the name of Scotland.

In the history of festivity, the Colchester Oyster Feast is unique. The origin of the feast is lost in the mists of antiquity, though its written records go back to 1667; it appears to have been held every year on St. Denis's Day, October 9th, which under the New Style has become October 20th. When it was attended only by the Mayor and Council it was made a charge upon the town accounts; but since the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 it has been held

at the personal expense of the Mayor, and in recent years has become a great public function to which have been invited some of the most eminent men of the day.

Colchester's oyster fishery dates from time immemorial. There is abundant evidence of its succulent bivalves having attained great popularity among the luxurious Romans of old. In the fourth century the historian Macrobius asserts that St. Sylvester and the Roman Pontiffs never failed to have British oysters on their tables. In fact, British native oysters were renowned in ancient Rome, and their praises were sung by Juvenal, Martial, and other Latin poets. Even before the Christian era the historian Sallust declared that "after all there is some good in the poor Britons—they can produce an oyster."

"The olde luxuryous Romanes vaunte did make,
Of gustful oysters tooke in Lucrine's lake ;
Your Essex better hath, and suche perchance
As tempted Cæsar first to pass from France."

Perhaps no other town is in the exceedingly happy position of being able to make high festival of its staple production.

The townsmen of Farnham have for three hundred years enjoyed an annual venison dinner, the gift of the Bishop of Winchester. The custom originated as a judicious bribe ; to prevent the mysterious disappearance of his fattest bucks, the Bishop promised to give one each year if his herd were not interfered with. Honesty is its own reward.

A notable festive gathering in the annals of literature—there are many others—was the Theatrical Fund Dinner, held February 23, 1827, at which Sir Walter Scott avowed himself, for the first time, as the author of the *Waverley Novels*.

XXXVII

GOOD CHEER IN FICTION

Gargantua—17,913 cows to supply a babe with milk—A giant's appetite and daily fare—Barmecide's feast of illusory fare—The first feast of the faithful in Paradise—A Spanish nuptial feast—Scottish feudal feasting—Festive allusions in "Waverley"—"Noctes Ambrosianæ"—A deluge of haggis—The rude plenty of Arthurian legend—The Dickensian conception of good cheer—Bob Cratchit's goose—Little Copperfield's conciliation of the greedy waiter.

LITERATURE teems with feasts and good cheer. The feasts of fiction are as numerous as they are enjoyable—for who has not feasted with his favourite characters? who has not partaken of their enjoyment, and, in their delectable company, "sated the edge of appetite by bare imagination" of the feast which the accomplished fictionist has prepared for us with a skill which is as great as his zest?

In point of magnitude the most colossal feast ever described is the one which has given us the word "gargantuan," as meaning enormous, inordinate, something great beyond all limits. It was the French satirist Rabelais who created the giant Gargantua, possessing all the wonders of an appetite and a thirst which a lively imagination could invent and a masterly command of language could adequately paint.

Immediately Gargantua was born he cried out

“Drink, drink !” so lustily that no less than 17,913 cows had to be provided to supply this vigorous babe with milk. Later we read that when King Grangonsier made a feast for his son Gargantua on his return after defeating King Picrochole,

“they made ready supper, and of extraordinary, besides his daily fare, were roasted sixteen oxen, three heifers, two-and-thirty calves, three-score-and-three fat kids, fourscore and fifteen wethers, three hundred barrow pigs soused in sweet wine, elevenscore partridges, seven hundred snipes and woodcocks, four hundred London Cornwall capons, six thousand pullets and as many pigeons, six hundred crammed hens, fourteen hundred leverets, three hundred and three buzzards, and one thousand and seven hundred cockerels. For venison, they could not so suddenly come by it, only eleven wild boars, which the Abbot of Turpenay sent, and eighteen fallow deer, which the Lord Grammont bestowed ; together with seven score pheasants, which were sent by the Lord of Essars, and some dozens of quests, cushats, ring-doves, and wood-culvers ; river-fowl, teals and awteals, bitterns, courtes, plovers, francolins, briganders, tyrasons, young lapwings, tame ducks, shovelers, woodlanders, herons, moor-hens, criels, storks, comepetiers, oranges, flamans which are phœnicopters, terrigoles, turkies, arbens, coots, solingee, curlews, termagants, and water-wagtails, with a great deal of cream, curds, and fresh cheese and store of soup, pottage and brewis, with variety. Without doubt this was meat enough,” reflectively adds the historian Alcofribas.

Barmecide's Feast, the typical banquet of emptiness, we get from “The Arabian Nights.” Barmecide asked Schacabac, a poor starving wretch, to dinner, and set before him an empty plate. “How do you like your soup?” asked the merchant. “Excellently well,” replied Schacabac. “Did you ever see whiter bread?” “Never, honourable sir,” was the civil answer. Wine was then brought in, and Schacabac was pressed to drink, but excused himself by saying he was always quarrelsome in his cups. Being over-persuaded, he fell foul of his host, and was provided with food to his heart's content.

The term “Barmecide's Feast” is commonly used

to express the uncertainty of things on which we have set our hearts, or the joy which is found to be a mere illusion when we come to partake of it.

“To-morrow! the mysterious unknown guest
Who cries aloud, ‘Remember Barmecide!’
And trembles to be happy with the rest.”

The first delight of the happily departed on entering the Mohammedan Paradise is a glorious feast. According to the Koran it is a future reward to dream about. On the entertainment of the faithful on their admission to Paradise, thus speaks the prophet :—

“The whole earth will then be as one loaf of bread, and for meat they shall have the ox Balam and the fish Nun, the lobes of whose livers will suffice seventy thousand men. From this feast every one will be dismissed to the mansion assigned him, where he will have such a share of felicity as is proportionate to his merit, but vastly exceeding comprehension or computation, since the very meanest in Paradise will have 80,000 servants, 72 wives of the girls of Paradise, beside the wives he had in this world, and a tent erected for him of pearls, jacinths, and emeralds of a very large extent. There he will be waited on by 300 attendants while he eats, and shall be served in dishes of gold, whereof 300 shall be set before him at once, containing each a different kind of food, the last morsel of which will be as grateful as the first, and will also be supplied with as many sorts of liquors in vessels of the same metal; and to complete the entertainment, there will be no want of wine, which, though forbidden in this life, will yet be freely allowed in the next without danger, since the wine of Paradise will never inebriate though you drink it for ever.”

In Cervantes’s immortal romance “Don Quixote” is a description of the marriage feast of Camacho the Rich. The first thing which presented itself to Sancho’s sight, we read, was a whole bullock spitted upon a large elm. In six huge pots around, entire sheep were swallowed up, and floated like so many pigeons. Hares ready flayed and fowls ready

plucked hung upon the branches. Sancho saw bewildering quantities of venison and wild fowl hanging about on the branches of trees ; he counted skins full of wines, and hillocks of white loaves and cheeses piled up in the manner of stacked bricks. And as the feast was to be a Spanish one there were ready two cauldrons of oil, larger than dyers' vats, for the inevitable frying. In this Rabelaisian description of a nuptial feast, Cervantes has been accused of a sly satire on the characteristic frugality of his countrymen, the bulk of whom are generally content with a meal of chocolate, bread, garlic, and grapes.

Scott, in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," gives us a picturesque description of the marriage feast of Cranston and the Lady Margaret :—

"The spousal rites were ended soon,
 'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
 And in the lofty-archèd hall
 Was spread the gorgeous festival ;
 Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
 Marshalled the rank of every guest ;
 Pages, with ready blade, were there,
 The mighty meal to carve and share.
 O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
 And princely peacock's gilded train,
 And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave,
 And cygnet from St. Mary's wave,
 O'er ptarmigan and venison,
 The priest had spoke his benison.
 Then rose the riot and the din,
 Above, beneath, without, within !
 For, from the lofty balcony,
 Rang trumpet, shalm, psaltery ;
 Their clanging bowls old warriors quaffed,
 Loudly they spoke, and loudly laughed ;
 Whispered young knights, in tone more mild,
 To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
 The hooded hawks, high perched on beam,
 The clamour joined with whistling scream,
 And flapped their wings, and shook their bells.
 In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.

Round go the flasks of ruddy wine
From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine ;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry."

An illuminative exposition of the Scottish kitchen is given in the pages of "Waverley." On the banqueting board at which Fergus McIvor entertained Edward Waverley there were fish, game, and made dishes at the upper end, and at the lower, immense clumsy joints of mutton and beef, but no pork—swine's flesh being the Highlander's abomination. The central dish was a yearling lamb, called a "hog in har'st," set upon its legs, with a bunch of parsley in its mouth. The accompanying beverages were claret and champagne for the chieftain and his guests, with whisky and strong ale for the braw clansmen.

At the breakfast which Lady Margaret Bellenden gave Claverhouse in the great hall of Tillietudlem were no tea or coffee, rolls or toast, but viands solid and substantial—the priestly ham, the knightly sirloin, the noble baron of beef, the princely venison pasty ; the silver flagons mantled with generous wines or foamed with amber ale. Scott's ideas of hospitality are generous and commendable.

Surely there was never a more extraordinary feast than that described in "Noctes Ambrosianæ," in which occurred the "deluge of haggis." The dishes, brought in all together, were as miscellaneous a collection as could be well imagined—a hot roasted round of beef, a couple of boiled ducks, a trencher of tripe *à la* Meg Dods, a haggis, pickled salmon, Welsh rabbits, oysters raw, stewed, scalloped, roasted, and pickled, "Rizzards," "Finzeans" (sun-dried haddock and smoke-dried haddock), and red herrings. This was supposed to be "a bonny wee neat bit sooper for three" ; and if appetite for the encounter could have been generated by excitement, it was soon forth-

coming ; for, alarming to relate, as soon as the shepherd had all too rashly " stuck " the haggis, it overflowed the table ! Then there was stir and bustle and consternation, a mad rush for towels, and a calling of all hands to the rescue. Presently the messy tide overflowed the carpet, and a greater demand was made on the napery for the construction of a dam across the floor. Indeed, ere the festivity could be resumed, a period of perturbation and disturbance had to be endured, till the wretched haggis had " subsided." When eventually, the precious company had escaped being " drowned in haggis," a fate far " waur than Clarence's dream," confidence was restored, and the festivity at last proceeded with soberness and harmony. This memorable supper may have been free from grossness, but, looked at fairly, it was scarcely the ethereal meal which forms that high ideal of the votaries of the simple life—as Adam and Eve dining upon apples with the angel Gabriel, in the bowers of Paradise.

Coming to this country, Tennyson is a pleasant guide to the dietary of the classic period of Arthurian legend, if not altogether a safe one. As a poet he makes the moods of men correspond with the food with which they nourish themselves. Thus when Geraint arrived at Yniol's impoverished household, Enid went marketing into the town, and came back with

"The means of goodly welcome, flesh and wine,
Sweet cakes to make them cheer,
And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread ;
And then, because their hall must also serve
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread the board,
And stood behind and waited on the three."

A modest and cheerful meal enough, and very different from the rude plenty of the feast which was made by the Earl Doorm's lusty men when they

“ . . . brought in whole hogs and quarter beeves,
And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh ;
And none spake word, but all sat down at once,
And ate with tumult in the naked hall,
Feeding like horses when you hear them feed ;
Till Enid shrank far back into herself.”

The Dickensian conception of what constituted good cheer generally ran to the extreme of over-eating. In the Pickwickian Christmas celebration, for instance, that hearty old host the jovial Mr. Wardle would have compelled every man, woman, and child about him, just as a guarantee of good-fellowship, to eat far more than was good for them.

And yet, of all the feasts of fiction, which of them can compare with the Christmas dinner at Bob Cratchit's? In the whole range of literature there is nothing to compare with it for the intensity of its pathos and humour. We read that the young Cratchits went to the bakehouse to bring home the goose in high procession. Then the narrative proceeds :—

“ Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds ; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course—and in truth it was something very like it in that hour. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot ; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour ; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple sauce ; Martha dusted the hot plates ; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table ; the young Cratchits set chairs for everybody not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast ; but when she did, and when the long-expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah !

“ There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there

ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple sauce and mashed potatoes, it was sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish) they hadn't ate it all at last. Yet every one had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular, were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows. But now, the plates being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs. Cratchit left the room alone—too nervous to bear witnesses—to take the pudding up and bring it in.

"Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back-yard and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose—a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid. All sorts of horrors were supposed.

"Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper! A smell like a washing day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house, and a pastry-cook's next door to that. That was the pudding. In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered—flushed, but smiling proudly—with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in a half-a-quarter of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

"Oh! what a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing."

When the "Christmas Carol" was played at the Adelphi Theatre, with Toole as Bob Cratchit, much realism was got out of the Cratchit Christmas dinner-scene, a real goose and a real plum-pudding being served up every night. Tiny Tim was played by a somewhat emaciated little girl, who sat by the fireside and was fed with dainty morsels by the other little Cratchits, who clustered about the dinner-table, and who, needless to say, were as willing to play as good a knife and fork on the stage as they are supposed to do in the book. Of all the little

Cratchits, however, Tiny Tim proved the most voracious. Like his famous young relative, Oliver Twist, he always wanted more, and night after night such large portions of goose and plum-pudding were handed to this exacting and hungry little invalid that even the good-natured Toole grew annoyed, feeling that the poetry of the scene was being missed, and at last became absolutely angry with the child for its supposed gluttony. Being at length taken to task on the subject, poor Tim made a confession. The child had a sister (a not-too-well-fed sister) who was employed in the theatre. The fire by which Tim sat was a stage fire, through which anything could be easily conveyed to one waiting at the other side, and thus poor little Tim's goose and pudding were more than shared on each night. When Toole told the story to Dickens the latter was greatly touched, and said, "I hope you gave the child the whole goose."

This may recall a similar story of suspected infantile voracity in the case of David Copperfield, when he was sent away to school for the first time. On his way, the inexperienced little traveller had dinner at the Yarmouth coaching inn, where the wily coffee-room waiter took mean advantage of his innocence.

First, this artful individual suggested that the half-pint of ale allowed with the dinner was of a dangerously strong brew, and that it would be prudent if David permitted him to take the risk of drinking it. The boy, taken with the man's extreme affability and obliging nature, eagerly acquiesced in the arrangement. The covers being removed from the chops and potatoes, William the waiter declared there was nothing so efficacious in warding off the possible ill-effects of the beer, and thereupon took a chop by the bone in one hand, and a potato in the other, and ate away to the boy's great satisfaction. He

afterwards took another chop and another potato, and after that, another chop and another potato. Between the two the dish was very effectually cleared, and then the pudding was brought in and set before the little traveller.

The waiter stood, appearing to ruminate, to become absent in mind for some moments. Then, rousing himself, he inquired, "How's the pie?" "It's a pudding," David made answer. "Pudding! Why, bless me, so it is!" And coming nearer the table, added, "You don't mean to say it's a batter pudding?" "Yes, it is indeed." "Why, a batter-pudding is my favourite. Ain't it lucky? Come on, little un, and let's see who'll get most." And when this very friendly and companionable waiter was matched against the forlorn and trusting child, appetite to appetite, dispatch to dispatch, table-spoon to tea-spoon, the result may be easily guessed. At his departure from the inn it was not a little disconcerting to David to find, as he was being helped up behind the coach, that he was supposed to have eaten all the dinner without assistance. He had observed that the women-servants came out to look and giggle at him as a young phenomenon; and he did not fail to discover what it all meant when the landlady from her bow-window called out to the guard, "Take care of that child, George, or he'll burst!"

* * * * *

Here, "with soothing memories of spent appetites," we take leave of our subject; and surely not without "many brave memories of past good cheer" do we quit our pleasant and desultory roaming over the vast fields of food, faring, and feasting. The subject is a fascinating one, and almost inexhaustible. But now—

"My banquet is to close our stomachs up
After all our great good cheer."

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